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POPERY
NOT
CATHOLICISM.



POPERY NOT CATHOLICISM.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART FIRST.

SIX LECTURES ON INFALLIBILITY.

PART SECOND.

VINDICIÆ LAICÆ;

OR,

THE RIGHT OF THE LAITY TO THE UNRESTRICTED READING
OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES VINDICATED.

BY THE LATE

REV. B. W. MATHIAS, M.A.

CHAPLAIN OF THE BETHESDA, DUBLIN.

EDITED BY THE

REV. W. B. STEWART MATHIAS, B.A.



"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying: Go out from
her, my people: that you be not partakers of her sins,
and that you receive not of her plagues."—Rev. xxviii. 4—
Douay version.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO., STATIONERS' HALL.

EDINBURGH: OLIVER & BOYD. DUBLIN: S. OLDHAM, SUFFOLK-ST.

LIVERPOOL: EDWARD HOWELL, 6, CHURCH STREET.

1851.

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PREFACE.

THE following controversial Lectures, on the Infallibility of the Church of Rome, were delivered in the Bethesda Chapel, Dublin, by the late Rev. B. W. MATHIAS, Chaplain, at a period when the clergy of both Churches in Ireland began to come forward in advocacy of their peculiar tenets. *Discussions* were frequently held, and the public mind was strongly excited on the subject. The deputations from the Hibernian Bible Society rarely visited the Auxiliary Societies throughout the country without their meetings terminating by a *discussion*, commenced by the Roman Catholic priest of the place, or else, by some one put forward by him, the advocate of scriptural truth on such occasion being most generally the clerical member of the deputation. Both Protestants and Romanists felt deeply interested in the results of these controversial campaigns. Many of the latter were led to a serious and scriptural examination of the doctrines of their Church; and *not a few* members of that communion regularly visited the revered author of these discourses for his advice and instruction; and many, both priests and private individuals, through his instrumentality, were led to forsake, from conviction, the soul-destroying errors of Romanism, and embrace the pure religion of the unadulterated gospel of Christ.

The Editor has taken no further liberties with

these lectures than was absolutely necessary, in order to render them fit to meet the public eye. As they were delivered at intervals of a fortnight or a month, recapitulations and repetitions unavoidably occurred, these have been omitted; and some expressions, which might, perhaps, be used with effect in the pulpit, have been changed for others, similar in meaning, but more suitable for a printed discourse. A few notes have been added.

The essay, entitled "*Vindiciæ Laicæ*," was originally published in the form of a pamphlet, in the year 1827, and is reprinted, *verbatim*, from the copy in the Editor's possession.

The immediate cause of the present publication is the recent aggression of the Bishop of Rome, which renders it necessary that Protestants should have the arguments in favour of the truth placed fully and fairly before them.

The Editor presents this volume to the public with respectful confidence, as being the production of a late eminent servant of God, who has been well styled the Father of the Church in Ireland.

The earnest prayer of the Editor is, that the great Head of the Church may be pleased to accept this little work, and condescend to follow it with His blessing, for the maintenance of truth, and the exposure of error.

LIVERPOOL, *January*, 1851.

N.B.—*All passages of importance are given according to the Douay version.*

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SERMON I.

1 THESSALONIANS v. 21.

“ Prove all things : hold fast that which is good.”

THE Apostle Paul wrote his epistles to the Thessalonians under very peculiar and interesting circumstances. He had planted a church in Thessalonica, where he met with severe persecution, insomuch that he was compelled to leave it after a very short stay ; but his heart was deeply impressed with affectionate interest for those whom he had left behind as the fruit of his ministry, and to whom the word of the Lord had been blessed. “ For,” as the apostle writes in the first chapter of this epistle, “ our gospel hath not been unto you in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much fulness.”*

In the course of his progress, after leaving Thessalonica, he sent there Timothy, his companion, and “ fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ,” in order “ to establish them, and comfort them concerning their faith.” It was on that occasion that this epistle was written.

I have selected the passage, which constitutes my text, for the purpose of making a few observations introductory to a series of discourses, which, if it please God, I intend delivering on doctrines at issue between us and our brethren of the Church of Rome. I feel the deepest

* Donay version.

affection for my brethren of that communion, and trust, that in my addresses to any such, whom the providence of God may bring within these sacred walls, I shall not advance any thing which can give them just cause of offence. I contend not with men, but with things. My objection is not to persons, but to principles; and I attack those principles, because I sincerely believe that they are subversive of the purity of religion, and also, because I desire to deliver my countrymen from their baneful influence.

We shall now make a few introductory remarks on the words of our text: "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good." Nearly all the epistles written by St. Paul were *general*, directed not to the clergy exclusively, but to the laity also. In fact, if I wanted to establish the point, I could prove that they were written more generally to the laity than to the clergy; but I shall content myself with proving that they were written as generally.

The apostle wrote three epistles to clergymen, viz. two to Timothy, and one to Titus. All the rest were written to churches, and whatever was written to churches, was written to all the laity composing those churches. You may easily satisfy yourselves on this point, by examining the introduction to the epistles, which were directed to *all* in that place. This is the case with the epistle before us: "Paul, and Sylvanus, and Timothy; to the church of the Thessalonians." In fact, the greater part of it is written, or directed, to the people, particularly the chapter furnishing our text.

In the 12th verse of this chapter, the apostle says: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them who

labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you." You here plainly see he is addressing the people. He proceeds in the same strain until he comes to the verse before us, and here is an *express* direction to the laity not to take their religion upon the word of any *man*, but "to prove all things," and to "hold fast that which is good;" whether it lead them through evil report, or through good report. Yes, it is the solemn duty of every man, after *proving*, to "hold fast that which is good."

The object of our present address is, to bring before you the grounds on which our forefathers felt it their *duty* to withdraw from the communion of the Church of Rome. I am perfectly satisfied that the same grounds exist to the present day, to justify a continuance of that separation.¹ And I am equally satisfied, that if our forefathers did not *prove* their reasons for withdrawing, they were wrong. Surely, it is the duty of both the Roman Catholic clergy and laity to prove whether the first vital principles of their religion be in accordance with the religion of Christ.

The word which the apostle uses, and which is translated, "prove," is of peculiarly strong import; it is a word which denotes to make *proof* of any thing, like the trial of metals through the ordeal of fire, in order to ascertain whether they are pure or not. St. Peter so

1. Yes, and let us glory in it, our forefathers were separatists, in the noblest sense of the term, separatists from the MODERN, the TRIDENTINE Church of Rome, but not from that Church at Rome, whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. O, may their children maintain that separation in all its Scriptural integrity.—ED.

uses it : "That the trial of your faith, (much more precious than gold, which is tried by the fire.)*"

In proving all things, we must put them to the *test*. Our first enquiry, therefore, should be, what *is* the test? For if we are ignorant of that, we cannot prove anything by it. Our religion is not a thing of human invention, it proceeds from God, and is contained in his revealed word. Whatever opinions, therefore, we entertain, should be brought to divine revelation, as to the test by which we are to "prove all things." Both churches agree that the word of God is the basis of true religion; but, say our brethren of the Roman Catholic Church, there are two revelations of the divine will; one, written, another, unwritten; which latter is commonly termed tradition.

According to the first decree of the fourth session of the Council of Trent, the written and the unwritten word are derived from the same source; that is, they proceed from God; consequently, they are entitled to the same degree of reverence, and the same feeling of belief and piety. Therefore, when we bring things to the test, it is immaterial whether we bring them to tradition, the unwritten word, or to the sacred Scriptures, the written word, since, being derived from the same source, they cannot possibly clash, for God would not say one thing in his written word, and speak that which is contrary in the unwritten word. The Spirit of God cannot contradict himself, and what he speaks is true. It appears to me, then, that we may take our stand upon whichever we choose; but as there is great difficulty in getting at

* 1 Ep. i. 7.

the unwritten word, and none whatever in examining that which is written, I shall take you to the written word,—the full and final revelation of God to man.

In proceeding to the test, I might select a large variety of passages to prove that the written word of God is *the* test, but I shall content myself with a few. The first I shall present to your attention is the 18th Psalm ;* on reading which, we shall find the writer noticing two ways in which God had revealed himself to man. 1. By his works : “ The heavens shew forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands.” II. By his law : “ The justices of the Lord are right, rejoicing hearts : the commandment of the Lord is lightsome, enlightening the eyes.” In the Protestant version thus : “ The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart : the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

In the 118th Psalm,† we find the same principles declared, and an interesting and beautiful proof, that David loved, and delighted in, the word of God.

In Isaiah viii. 19, 20, in allusion to this subject, the prophet saith : “ And when they shall say to you : Seek of pythons, and of diviners,” &c.—(Prot. version.—“ Seek unto them that have familiar spirits,” &c.)—“ To the law rather, and to the testimony. And if they speak not according to this word, they shall not have the morning light.”—(Prot. vers.—“ It is because there is no light in them.”)

I do not wish to multiply passages, but as I have stated the words of Isaiah, permit me to direct your attention to

* 19th in the Protestant version.

† 119th Prot. version.

the remarks of one who lived between 700 and 800 years after. One who was a high advocate for the Pharisees, and a strenuous opponent of the religion of Christ, until it pleased the Lord in his mercy to change his heart, and direct him to the glorious light of the gospel of truth and peace; I mean the Apostle Paul. In Rom. ii. 17, he contends with the Jews, who boasted of their privileges, but did not *spiritually* enjoy them: "But if thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the more profitable things." The marginal reading of our Bible is: "Triest the things that differ." Thus, according to St. Paul, the written law was the standard of the Jewish people.

Let us now look to the New Testament-day, and we shall find that our Lord distinctly proves the point for which we are contending, viz.:—That the written word is *the* test. In Luke x. 25, we are informed that "a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying, Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?" What was the answer of Christ? A reference to *tradition*? No. "But he said to him, what is *written in the law*? How readest thou?" Consider also the example of the Messiah in a parable, and though it be only a parable, it was employed by him who was its author. Luke xvi. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The former requested Abraham to send Lazarus to his father's house, that he might testify to his five brethren, lest they also should come into the place of his torment. What was Abraham's reply? "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them." They have the highest authority, the noblest, the only true standard already: "Let them

hear them." But the rich man said, "No, father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they would do penance." (Prot. vers.—"They would repent.") Abraham answered, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead."

The reply of Abraham establishes the *test* of the written law, and gives to it an authority and force, which could not be derived, even from the testimony of one risen from the dead.

In Matthew xxii. you will find a very captious question put to our Lord by the Sadducees, who denied the existence of angels, and the resurrection of the dead. An important doctrine was to be brought to the test. Our Lord, in replying to the Sadducees, said, "You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." Ignorance of the written word was the source of their error. But our Lord shewed them that nothing was impossible with the Almighty; and he proved this, not by the wisdom of men, but by referring them to the Scriptures, as contained in Exodus iii., where we have related the account of God's address to Moses from the burning bush, saying, "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living."—Such^r is the testimony of our Lord.

Let us now turn our attention to the testimony of the apostles. I shall select two. One, the apostle of the circumcision: the other, the apostle of the uncircumcision. I refer you to Acts xvii. 1, 2. "And when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul, according to his custom, went in

unto them ; and for three sabbath days he reasoned with them out of the Scriptures." The second verse demands our most serious attention ; first, as the *test* by which the apostle's opinions were to be tried : " He reasoned with them out of the Scriptures ;" second, the frequency of so doing : " According to his custom." It was not once, nor twice, but his constant practice. This great apostle viewed his hearers as reasonable beings, and he directed their enquiries to the noblest source of information, to the Scriptures, that only pure test, which gives the truth ; which gives the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

This principle is expressly stated in 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17 : " All Scripture inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice ; that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work." Prot. vers.—" All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." If the Scriptures be such, why should we search further? Where else shall we go for another and a better standard? St. Peter saith, 2 Ep. i. 19 : " And we have the more firm prophetical word : whereunto you do well to attend." Prot. vers.—" We have also a more sure word of prophecy : whereunto ye do well that ye take heed."

Thus have I endeavoured to demonstrate, both from the Old and New Testaments, that the written word of God is *the* test, the standard of truth ; that it is the test which the Almighty himself has established ; and, that if received in faith, it will assuredly lead us into the

path of truth, being itself the source and centre of all truth.

We are also directed in what manner and with what frame of mind, we should read the word of God. It is with *humility* and *sobriety* of mind that we should examine the sacred volume. David, Psalm 118,* 18, approaches it with prayer: "Open thou my eyes: and I will consider the wondrous things of thy law."—Prot. vers.—"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

We are called upon, not only to "prove all things," but also to "hold fast that which is good;" for the wickedness of our hearts would incline us to abandon it: the world would incline us to abandon it: and above all, the enemy of souls would incline us to abandon it.

How important and comprehensive is the admonition of the text! Consider the word **ALL**. Do not let a single point escape untried. Test "*all* things." But, perhaps, it may be asked, why is it necessary that we should "prove all things"? We have a strong precedent and satisfactory answer in Acts xvii. After St. Paul had left Thessalonica, where he had been ill-treated by the Jews, he came to Berea. The Bereans heard his words; they heard him appeal to the Scriptures, and they received, and held fast that which was true, not because *he* told them that it was so, but because they *searched the Scriptures daily*, whether these things were so. The passage in the Douay version runs thus:—ver. 11.—"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the word with all eagerness, daily searching the Scriptures, whether these things

* 119, Prot. vers.

were so." Prot. vers.—"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Thus the Bereans appealed to the test, and what was the result? "And many indeed of them believed." They became Christians.

My dear brethren, let none be ashamed to do that which the apostles did: let none be ashamed to follow the example of the noble Bereans: and above all, let none hesitate to obey the command of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Search the Scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that give testimony of me." The traditions of men may, and will, deceive you, but the written word, like its eternal Author, is unerring, and shall guide you into all truth.

Turn your attention to the address of Christ, through St. John, to the Church of Ephesus: "I Know thy works,and thou hast tried them who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."* Here, we find the Church of Ephesus was approved for so doing, so that we have not only precedents, but we have commands also. St. John writes: "Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits if they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."† Believe not every individual, who professes to be of God, but *try* them. Thus, then, if we be asked, why we "prove all things"? Our reply is, we have precedents and commands. Can any man's religion be that of his heart, if he have not examined it?

* Rev. ii. 2.

+ 1 Ep. iv. 1.

Let me also refer you to St. Peter. I love quoting St. Peter. He was a dearly beloved disciple and servant of Christ, and though he had his failings, he had also great excellencies. He writes: "Being ready always to satisfy every one that asketh you a reason of that hope which is in you."* But what "reason" can that man give, who has never examined the ground of his hope? And in what is he superior to the Mohammedan or Hindoo, if he cannot render "a reason" for that hope which is in him? But why should we examine in order to give "a reason"? You will find the answer in Rom. xiv. 12: "Every one of us shall render account to God for himself."

Now, if under these circumstances, we do not examine the ground of our hope, if we do not believe what God has written, how can we give an account to him? And that account we have to give, and must give, *ourselves*. It will not avail us to say: 'Our teachers and our clergymen are responsible for what the laity do.' Were the clergy *only* to be responsible, the laity might do what they pleased. But no! The clergy are responsible for what they *teach*, and the laity are responsible for what they *believe* and *do*. Your pastors can do nothing for you in the awful day of judgment.

There is an important and alarming passage in Ezekiel: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the house of Israel: and thou shalt hear the word out of my mouth, and shalt tell it them from me. If, when I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die: thou declare it not to him, nor speak to him, that he may be converted from his wicked way, and live: the same wicked

* 1 Ep. iii. 15.

man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand."* Prot. vers.—“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.” Thus God addresses the clergy or watchmen, and states, that if they do not warn the wicked man, and tell him of his sins, he shall be lost, he shall die in his iniquity, and his teacher shall be lost with him.

One more passage before I conclude: “Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.” Mark the next verse: “Let them alone: they are blind, and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit.”†

In conclusion. I call upon you not to commit yourselves unto any *man*. It is *you* that will have to give *the* account. I call upon you, as in the sight of God, not to rest satisfied with the traditions of men, if you desire to escape eternal ruin. I call upon you as accountable beings,—I call upon you, as you value your immortal souls; and I call upon you by *all* these, to “search the Scriptures,” to “prove all things,” and to “hold fast that which is good.”

And may the Holy Spirit of God lead you to commit yourselves entirely to his keeping, and to build upon no “other foundation than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Amen.

* iii. 17, 18.

† Matt. xv. 13, 14.

SERMON II.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 21.

“Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.”

IN following up the command given in the text, I desire to call your attention to a particular doctrine of the Church of Rome, in order to *try* it by the standard of truth.

Considerable difficulty exists in ascertaining in a clear and distinct manner, what the doctrines of the Church of Rome really are. You may possibly reply: that is strange! Are we not all aware what the Church of Rome believes? We are indeed acquainted with what the Church of Rome *professes* to believe, but when we desire to ascertain any particular doctrine, we find that the index to her principles of belief is neither clear nor simple.

It is peculiarly so with the doctrine now to be considered; even to this day INFALLIBILITY has never been defined; neither by pope, nor council, nor by any authority that will enable us distinctly to comprehend its true nature, and examine it for ourselves, nor has it ever been brought forward in that tangible form by which we might refer to it as a standard even of their own erecting.

After the most diligent research, I believe I am not far from the truth, when I state, that the Church of Rome claims solely for herself the privilege, that she cannot err in determining matters of faith and morals.

Though I am not immediately proceeding to examine the testimony advanced in support of this claim, I cannot forbear observing, that the mere assertion of such privilege must appear, even at the first view, not only extraordinary, but also most extraordinary. For, when the Church of Rome comes forward, demanding for herself such prerogative, our attention is naturally directed to the constitution of the claimant, and questions like the following present themselves to our consideration:—Of what materials is the Church of Rome composed? Are its members beings like ourselves? or, are they something superhuman? Are they alone exempted from the common lot of humanity? * And are they justified in saying: “stand by thyself, come not near to me: for I am holier than thou.” †

I repeat, that at the very first view, there is a strong presumption against this claim. Place it in what light, and examine it in what point, you please, it is a miracle—a standing miracle! Are you prepared to admit a standing miracle in the Church of Christ, after a lapse of 1800 years, when for seventeen centuries there has not been a manifest and open miracle? In a word, are you prepared to concede to the Church of Rome a claim, which no other church ever presumed to make? If not, you must admit that there is a strong presumption against the doctrine of infallibility.

But the exact seat of this infallibility has never been authoritatively defined. Some place it in the pope, in preference to an assembly of 200 or 300 men of different

* *Humanum est errare.*—ED.

† Isaiah lrv. 5.

passions. We will view it as placed in the pope,² and trace his progress from his infancy.

Behold him, then, a child, brought into this world, subject to all our misfortunes and passions. Behold him growing up, perhaps a wayward, perhaps a giddy, or perhaps a serious and sedate boy ; but, as he advances through life, a man of like passions with us, and neither wiser nor better than others : he is then admitted to be fallible. Pursue him obtaining ordination, still he is fallible. Trace him as he advances towards the papal tiara, consecrated a bishop and wearing a cardinal's hat ; still he is fallible and liable to as much mistake in matters of faith and morals as others are. Now view him in his *ne plus ultra*,—raised to the popedom, and he instantly becomes altogether unlike his former self : he is then infallible. The man, speaking *ex Cathedra*, from the chair of St. Peter, is infallible. But when he leaves the chair, he returns to his former self, he is fallible,—liable to error. Now, though the question, where infallibility truly resides, is controverted, some placing it in the pope, others in the pope and council, &c., you have only to multiply all the extraordinary characteristics and

2. The Roman Pontiff has no exclusive right to the title of *Papa*, or *Pope*. For every *bishop* was anciently called *Papa*, *Father*, or *Pope*. It was the title common to all bishops, who are called *Fathers* of the church, and *Fathers* of the clergy ; and *Papa* means no more.—*Augustine, Comm. in Psalm 44*. Thus, Dionysius, presbyter of Alexandria, speaking of his bishop, Heraclas, styles him : 'Heraclas, our blessed Pope.'—*Eusebius, lib. vii. c. 7*. Dionysius lived cent. iii. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, cent. iii., was styled *Papa*.—*Vid. Ep. xxiii. Cyp. oper.* The clergy of the Church of *Rome*, in their letter to the clergy of Carthage, call him 'Benedictum *Papam* Cyprianum.'—*Ep. viii. Cyp. oper.* In *Ep. xxx.* the presbyters and deacons of *Rome*, writing to him, style him, 'Beatissime ac gloriosissime *Papa*.' In *Ep. xxxvi.* he is called '*Papa*,' by the Roman clergy.—*Ed.*

sentiments of the pope, and if under all these circumstances and disadvantages, unanimity should exist, it is a miracle indeed !

Another strong presumption against infallibility presents itself in the fact, that the Almighty has had a church existing from the days of Adam down to the present period ; during the patriarchal and mosaical dispensations, and the brief dispensation of John the Baptist, comprising a period of 4000 years, in which infallibility neither existed nor was claimed ! Yes, that almighty Being, who has manifested the same fatherly care for His church in all the dispensations he has vouchsafed to man, did, for the space of 4000 years, leave it without the infallibility now claimed !

What ! no infallible head in the Jewish Church ? I admit that it has been asserted by some, that there was an infallible head in the Jewish Church, in order that they might establish a precedent for their own claim. But in making this assertion, they have been fastening a mill-stone round their own necks, for there is not a better authenticated fact in history, than that the Jews committed error upon error, repeatedly and fearfully. As a member of that church which takes the gospel alone for its guide, I feel myself delivered from a great weight here ; and if the infallibility of the Church of Rome be of the same nature as that of the Jewish Church, may God preserve us from it ! If it be to teach for doctrines the commandments of men ; if tradition is to supersede the standard of truth ; if it be the infallibility that impelled the Jews to reject the Saviour and crucify the Lord of life and glory, may we ever be strangers to it ! The Jews, for this horrible crime, have had their temple

destroyed, and themselves, for a period of nearly 2000 years, scattered throughout the world, enduring at once the scorn of men, and the curse of their rejected God and Saviour ! Allow me now to put this question to you : if it were necessary that an infallible guide should exist as a preservative against error, why were the patriarchal and other churches, for a period of 4000 years, left without it ? Were they less liable to error ? And if not, how can you account for its absence ? Is God the father of the whole, or only of a part of his church ?

Another strong presumption against infallibility offers itself in the following consideration : Roman Catholics imagine that they possess an inestimable privilege in being members of Rome's communion, since, as they assert and believe, that church can do no wrong. But I would urge them to consider, whether error alone will prove the destruction of the soul ; or, whether sin will not effect a more fearful ruin ! Therefore, though they should possess infallibility as a total guard against error, they would still require *impeccability*, or, a complete exemption from sin.

Before we proceed further, it will be necessary to examine the meaning of the word, Church.³ It is a term

3. "We must * * attend to the derivation of the word, *Church*. This term, (DAN: *Kirke*. SWED: *Kyrka*. DUTCH: *Kirch*. SCOTCH: *Kirk*.) is derived from the Greek, *Kuriake*, (*Oikia*, understood.) i. e. *Dominica Domus*, *The House of the Lord*: or else, from *Kuriou Oikos*. The Greek word for Church is *Ecclesia*. Suicer and Schleusner derive this term from the verb, *Eccalein*, to call out, (*evocare*, *convocare*.) Another Lexicographer derives it from the Hebrew, *Kel*, signifying, an assembly, for which the LXX. have, in different places, used the word, *Ecclesia*. See Deut. ix. 10. In its primary meaning it denotes an assembly of the people, called out by the Civil Magistrate. Acts. xix. 39. It also signifies an unlawful assembly. Acts. xix. 32. The word is also used in the

often used in controversy, and is made of particular importance to the Church of Rome.

In the Old Testament, the word means a convocation, or assembly of people called together; and in the New Testament it is expressly termed an assembly; read the latter part of Acts. xix. It applies to individuals as well as to bodies: see Hebrews xii. 23. I wish you to examine this point closely, and to exercise your judgment upon it. An important difference exists between us and the Church of Rome in this, that what in Scripture is applied *individually*, she applies *generally*. On the first propagation of Christianity in the world, different churches were founded; the first of these was called the Mother Church, but she never dared to term herself *Mistress*! God had a church at Jerusalem, and at Corinth; had he no fatherly care for them? He had a church at Philippi and Colosse; had he no regard for them? Were the seven churches of the Apocalypse to be totally disregarded, —to be shut out from the holy family of heaven, and the Church of Rome to be alone selected as the depository of

Acts, for a general assembly of the Jewish people. Acts. vii. 38. In this passage it means an assembly or society of men called out of mankind by the word of God. It is used by the LXX. in this sense, in Dent. xviii. 16, to denote the general assembly of the Jewish people. Most generally in the New Testament, it is used for the general assembly of those who profess the Christian doctrine, wheresoever dispersed throughout the world: that is, 'The Church militant here on earth;' or, as the Apostle's Creed has it, 'The holy Catholic,' or, Universal 'Church.' It is of this Church our Lord saith: "Upon this rock," St. Peter's confession of Christ, "I will build my church." Matt. xvi. 18. The Universal Church Triumphant and Glorified, is also expressed by this term. But this word, *Ecclesia*, is further applied to a particular Church, though it consist of several congregations. Acts. viii. 1. This word is also applied to the *place* where each congregation meets. Acts. xi. 26. It is used also for a single congregation. Rom. xvi. 5.—*Extract from an MS. of the Editor's.*

God's sacred word, and the dispenser of his salvation? It is monstrous! It is absurd in the extreme! What Rome claims, no other church ever attempted to claim!

But I may be asked, has God given no infallibility to his Church? Yes, he has: the BIBLE; his sacred word, indited by his holy Spirit; and on this point both churches agree, viz.:—that the written word of God is infallible. *One* infallibility has been conferred by Christ on his Church, even his own unerring, written word. Roman catholics do *you* require another? Do you want infallibility to be added to infallibility? God does nothing in vain. He has already given to us, in his written word, an infallible guide, a perfect rule for faith and morals. Surely, infallibility *is* infallibility. Why, then, do you desire that God should effect by two plans, what one is sufficient to accomplish?

I shall not be told, I hope, that although the Bible is infallible, the mind of man is fallible, and, consequently, may mistake, or misunderstand the word of God. If such an objection be advanced, it will not in the least

4. When the *Fathers* use the term, "*Catholic*," it is not in reference to the so-called Roman Catholic Church: for instance, St. Augustine, *Comm. Psal.* 44. 'Hæc est *Catholica* Ecclesia,' &c. For the name, '*Catholic*' is of great antiquity, and was adopted by the early Orthodox Christians to distinguish themselves from *Heretics*. It was the Christian's *surname*. (Heretics had party-names; yet they sometimes sheltered themselves under the name of Christians.) So, Pacian informs us. Ep. 1. ad Sempron: Novat. Heret.—'Christianus mihi nomen est: Catholicus cognomen; illud me nuncupat, istud ostendit.' And Optatus observes: that the Church of Christ had a just title to this name, being called '*Catholic*,' because it was universally diffused over all the world. Optat. *lib.* ii. p. 46. He says: 'Cum inde dicta sit *Catholica*, quod sit rationalis est ubique diffusa.' Hence we may learn, how utterly unfounded is the claim of Rome Papal, when she styles herself, in her antichristian pride and arrogance, "*The Holy Catholic Church*."—ED.

degree help forward the point at issue. If God have given one infallibility, and my fallible mind may mistake it, why may not my mind misunderstand the second infallibility likewise. Is God, with deepest reverence I ask it, more fallible than the pope? Can I comprehend the dictates of man, but the infallible word of God, written expressly as our unerring guide, must be considered incomprehensible? I repeat, it will not advance the question of infallibility one point, even if its advocates heaped infallibility upon infallibility. And as I am aware, that neither pope nor council have fully and fairly stated what that infallibility is, for which they contend, nor where it resides, may not I who am but fallible, mistake it.

As I purposed calling your attention to the scriptural grounds which are asserted for the doctrine of infallibility, I came provided with the Douay Bible, but I defer their examination to a future period, to my next lecture. But before I close, allow me to urge on you an instant examination of the subject. Place no reliance upon any infallibility, except the infallible word of God. Trust to no standard but the standard of truth, and pray that the Holy Spirit may so enlighten your mind in its serious contemplation, that you may be led to embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which God the Father hath given to us in His well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON III.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 21.

“Prove all things : hold fast that which is good.”

THERE are two points of view in which the claim of infallibility may be considered. 1. As a question of *right*, i. e., that there be a clear, established authority for the doctrine. 2. As a question of *fact*, i. e., has the Church of Rome ever exercised such authority? I purpose, God willing, to consider the subject in both points of view. First as to the right. We shall examine it by the Scriptures : for they are the earliest authentic documents on the subject of religion which we possess ; and if the grant of infallibility have been made, we shall find it mentioned by the great founder of the church. Here the Romanists join issue with us, not in saying, that they will not prove infallibility from any other source, but by an appeal to Scripture for their authority. To those passages, then, on which they place most reliance, we shall call your attention. The first we meet with, is in the Old Testament. Deut. xvii. I shall read the words, together with the note, as they stand in the Douay version, and then make a few remarks on the contents of the note. I shall read from the 8th to 13th verse inclusive : “ If thou perceive that there be among you a hard and doubtful matter in judgment, between blood and blood, cause and cause, leprosy and leprosy ; and thou see that the words of the judges

within thy gates do vary : arise and go up to the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. And thou shalt come to the priests of the Levitical race, and to the judge that shall be at that time : and thou shalt ask of them, and they shall shew thee the truth of the judgment. And thou shalt do whatsoever they shall say that pre-side in that place, which the Lord shall choose, and what they shall teach thee, according to His law ; and thou shalt follow their sentence : neither shalt thou decline to the right hand nor to the left hand. But he that will be proud, and refuse to obey the commandment of the priest who ministereth at that time to the Lord thy God, and the decree of the judge, that man shall die, and thou shalt take away the evil from Israel : and all the people hearing it, shall fear, that no one afterwards swell with pride."

We now come to the note, ' v. 8—*If thou perceive, &c.* Here we see what authority God was pleased to give to the church-guides of the Old Testament, in deciding, without appeal, all controversies relating to the law ; promising that they should not err therein : and surely he has not done less for the church-guides of the New Testament ?'

In bringing forward this passage as support for the claim of infallibility, its advocates have adopted a practice, which I cannot avoid noticing. In quoting the sacred writings to substantiate their peculiar doctrines, they, in multiplied instances, build their interpretation of scripture upon the *sound* rather than upon the *sense* of the passage they adduce. What follows from this system of interpretation ? that the passage under consideration, (Deut. xvii. 8, 18.,) if it prove infallibility,

will establish the infallibility of the Jewish Church. But we will examine the quotation in order to learn whether it will bear the interpretation given. If it prove infallibility, it will prove that of the civil as well as that of the ecclesiastical power: for, in addition to coming to "the priests of the Levitical race," the Jews were directed to go to the civil authority,—“to the judge that shall be at that time.” I therefore conceive, that, as the advocates of infallibility will not assent to this view, the note in their version brings out more than is contained in the text, because there is not in the entire passage any thing like a religious decision referred to. The dispute is “between blood and blood, between cause and cause,” &c. It is exclusively for the civil authority to decide.—I cannot dismiss this passage, without referring to an alteration which has taken place in the above note. In former editions of the Douay Bible, that note contained a most atrocious and horrible sentiment. It taught, in short, that every one who did not submit to the decisions of the church of Rome, was to be punished with death!*

There are several passages quoted from Isaiah by those who claim infallibility for Rome. Instead of noticing them here, I shall direct you to ‘A Table of References,’ at the end of the Douay Bible, where you will find them under the head: ‘The church is infallible in

* The note referred to, runs thus: ver. 8. *If thou perceive, &c.* Here we see what authority God was pleased to give to the church guides of the Old Testament, in deciding without appeal all controversies relating to the law, promising that they should not err therein, and punishing with death such as proudly refused to obey their decisions, and surely he has not done less for the church guides of the New Testament.—*Vide*, ‘The complete notes of the Douay Bible,’ &c., by the Rev. R. J. McGhee.

matters of faith,' and shall only bring forward one quotation from that prophet, there being a note attached to it. Isaiah lix. 20, 21: "And there shall come a Redeemer to Sion, and to them that return from iniquity in Jacob, saith the Lord. This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: my spirit that is in thee, and my words that I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth, and for ever." The note on the 21st verse is as follows: 'CHAP. lix. 21; *my covenant, &c.* Note here, a clear promise of perpetual orthodoxy to the Church of Christ.'

We must here go back to first principles. If these words contain a promise of unerring and continued orthodoxy, they contain it for the Jewish church. But we have already seen the nature of her infallibility. If we take them more generally, as divines do some passages, *in a sense of futurity*, i. e., when the passage does not agree with one church, to refer it to another, though not even then in existence. If we thus view the passage, it must refer, not to any individual church, but to the holy catholic, or universal church. If Romanist writers assert that it does not refer to the universal church, we must endeavour to refute their assertion. There are a variety of passages in the New Testament, which are quoted as authority for infallibility; if they prove the grant, they prove it for the Jewish church, but if we prefer referring them, as divines do, to a future church, they must apply to the universal church of Christ. They prove, therefore, the infallibility of the universal, not of any individual church. Wherefore,

they who claim infallibility for the Church of Rome, claim it erroneously from these passages.

We proceed now to the New Testament, from which a number of texts have been selected, in order to prove the claim of infallibility. I shall not mention them all here, but direct you, as before, to the 'Table of References,' under the head *Church Guides*, and their authority. Out of these, there are four principal passages, on which the advocates for infallibility specially rest their claim. Cardinal Bellarmine has rested upon them. Bossuet has rested upon them, in his Exposition of the Catholic Faith. To the examination of these we now come. I shall first call your attention to the last passage: 1 Tim. iii. 15. At verse 14, Paul says to Timothy: "These things I write to thee, hoping that I shall come to thee shortly." Verse 15, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." The note on this verse is to the following effect: 'Verse 15. *The pillar and ground of the truth.*—Therefore *the Church of the living God* can never uphold error, nor bring in corruption, superstition, or idolatry.' Let us consider this statement. St. Paul wrote this epistle to Timothy, who presided over the church at Ephesus. The apostle purposed going to him, but foreseeing that difficulties would lie in his way, he wrote to him word, how he should "behave" himself in the church at Ephesus. What church, then, according to the inspired opinion of St. Paul, was "the pillar and ground of the truth"? Must it not be the church at Ephesus? For there Timothy presided. Paul did not inform him how he should "behave" him-

self in the church at Rome, for he had no authority there. So that if the passage prove infallibility, it proves it for the church at Ephesus, not for the Church of Rome.

We pass on to St. Matthew xxviii. 20. There is a note on this, pointing out *how much* the passage avails for the Church of Rome. The words contain our Lord's last address to his apostles. I shall read from verse 18: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." The following note is given: 'CHAP. xxviii. ver. 18, &c. *All power, &c.*—See here the warrant and commission of the apostles and their successors, the bishops and pastors of Christ's Church. He received from his Father *all power in heaven and in earth*; and in virtue of *this power*, he sends them (*even as his Father sent him*, St. John xx. 21,) to *teach* and *disciple*, *Matheteusin*, not one, but *all nations*; and instruct them in *all truths*: and that he may assist them effectually in the execution of this commission, he promises to be with them, not for three or four hundred years only, but *all days, even to the consummation of the world*. How, then, could the Catholic Church ever go astray; having always with her pastors, as is here promised, Christ himself, who *is the way, the truth, and the life*? St. John xiv.' Now, I would ask any one to bring his common sense to the passage before us, and what will he find? He will learn that it is not merely a temporary advantage, but that it should descend

to those who should succeed the apostles. Christ spoke to the eleven apostles, (for the traitor had gone to his own place,) if the promise were not made to Peter alone, it avails nothing for the Church of Rome. I do not mean to say, that even if it had been made to Peter alone, it would prove infallibility. No, it proves the presence and blessing of God, which is promised to all Christian Churches. How can we for a moment believe that Christ would say to his apostles: "Going ye, teach all nations: and, behold, I am with Simon Peter: let the rest of you make disciples the best way you can: I am with Simon Peter all days, even to the consummation of the world." If *this* be not the conclusion, it must be, that Christ gave the same desirable blessing of clearing up doubts, and of freedom from error, to *all* the successors of the apostles, and to *all* Christian Churches. Therefore, if this passage prove infallibility, it will prove too much: for if it were said to all the apostles and their successors, it will prove the infallibility of the whole Christian Church.

We come next to Matt. xviii. 17. I shall read from verse 15: "But if thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother. And if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more: that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand. And if he will not hear them, tell the church. And if he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican. Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." The advocates of infallibility make the word

"church" to signify themselves: under what circumstances? May it not refer to the mother of all churches, the Church of Jerusalem? But it cannot possibly refer to the Church of Rome, because that church was not then in existence. It was a direction of our Lord to his disciples, not about religion, not about matters of faith, but concerning a misunderstanding between man and man. It has nothing to do with the Church of Rome. "If thy brother shall offend against thee," &c. "tell the church." What church? What other could it be than the Church of Jerusalem? If then, the passage prove infallibility, it proves it for the Church of Jerusalem, not for the Church of Rome.

We now come to consider the fourth and last passage: Matt. xvi. 18. I shall read from the 13th verse: "Whom do men say that the Son of man is? but they," the apostles, "said: some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: but whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered, and said:"—Here we find Peter, as usual, the spokesman of the apostles. He was, as the ancient fathers inform us, the eldest amongst the apostles: hence in the gospel we find him always their spokesman. He was forward, earnest, and ardent, and wished to speak his sentiments, as in ver. 16: "Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God." This great truth was not Peter's faith alone; for all the other apostles were taught exactly the same truth, and from the same source.—vs. 18, 19.—"And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to

thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." There is rather a lengthy note here: 'CHAP. xvi. ver. 18. *Thou art Peter*, &c.—As St. Peter, by divine revelation, here made a solemn profession of his faith of the divinity of Christ; so, in recompense of this faith and profession, our Lord here declares to him the dignity to which he is pleased to raise him; viz. that he, to whom he had already given the name of *Peter*, signifying a *rock*, St. John i. 42. should be a *rock* indeed, of invincible strength, for the support of the building of the church; in which building he should be, next to Christ himself, the chief foundation-stone, in quality of chief pastor, ruler, and governor; and should have accordingly all fulness of ecclesiastical power, signified by the keys of the kingdom of heaven.—*Upon this rock*, &c. The words of Christ to Peter, spoken in the vulgar language of the Jews, which our Lord made use of, were the same as if he had said in English, *Thou art a Rock, and upon this rock I will build my church*. So that, by the plain course of the words, Peter is here declared to be the rock upon which the church was to be built; Christ himself being both the principal foundation and founder of the same. Where also note, that Christ, by building his house, that is, his church, upon a rock, has thereby secured it against all storms and floods, like the wise builder, St. Matthew vii. 24, 25.—*The gates of hell*, &c. That is, the powers of darkness, and whatever satan can do, either by himself or his agents. For as the church is here likened to a house, or fortress, built on a rock;

so the adverse powers are likened to a contrary house or fortress, the gates of which, i. e, the whole strength, and all the efforts it can make, will never be able to prevail over the city or church of Christ. By this promise we are fully assured, that neither idolatry, heresy, nor any pernicious error whatsoever, shall, at any time, prevail over the church of Christ.' Two points present themselves here for consideration. 1. Whether Christ spoke of Peter's person: or, 2. of Peter's confession. It appears to me, that the most rational and correct method of explaining this passage, will be to understand it, not of Peter's person, but of his confession. If you understand it of his confession, it will agree with all that the Scriptures say upon the subject. I shall bring forward a few passages in order to prove this. We are told, that the New Testament church should be founded on a rock;* "And that rock was Christ."† The prophet saith: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God: behold, I will lay a stone in the foundations of Sion, a tried stone, a corner stone, a precious stone, founded in the foundation." In the marginal references on this verse, we are directed to Psalm cxvii. 22, (Psalm cxviii, in Prot. vers.,) a Psalm frequently quoted in the New Testament, and applied *particularly* to our Lord: for instance, Acts iv. 11, where, in the margin, you will find this very chapter of Isaiah referred to. And mark! in Acts iv, *St. Peter himself is the speaker*. St. Paul, Rom. ix. 33, writes: "As it is written: behold I lay in Sion a stumblingstone, and a rock of scandal: and whosoever believeth in him, shall not be

* Isaiah xxviii. 16.

† 1 Cor. x. 4.

confounded." In 1 Cor. iii. 2, the same apostle writes : "For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid ; which is Christ Jesus." Upon this passage will I take my stand. Let whosoever will, tell me of any "other foundation," and I will answer him with Ephes. ii. 20 : "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." Mark the word "apostles;" it was not *one* apostle, nor was it the apostles alone, but also, the prophets ; and *all* concur in saying, *the* Rock, *the* FOUNDATION, *is* CHRIST.

If St. Peter had any idea of what the Church of Rome claims for him, he would have mentioned it in his epistles. Read his words, 1 Ep. ii. 4 : "Unto whom coming, as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen and made honourable by God." St. Peter here acknowledges no "other foundation" than Christ himself. There is another point deserving your notice, viz.—the very words of St. Peter's confession, appear to have been one of the earliest confessions of faith in the Christian Church. I shall mention a few passages in which it occurs : John vi. 70, xi. 27 ; Acts viii. 37, ix. 20 ; Hebrews iv. 14, v. 5. If we understand the words, "on this rock," not to mean St. Peter's person, but his confession, then, these passages and his confession will have the most perfect concord.

But as to the former view ; in the first place, the very words of the original forbid us to understand it of Peter's person : "Thou art Peter, and upon *this* rock I will build my church." Let us consider this point. Our Lord, I say it with reverence, was a very matter-of fact speaker. If he had said : "On thee, Peter, will I build

my church," would it not be extraordinary in him to found his church on another person, and not on himself? There is another circumstance. The name, Peter, is masculine, and the three words relating to the confession are feminine, *Taute te petra*. Now, I ask, why were not they also masculine? Since Peter is masculine, if these words referred to his person, they should be masculine also. But Romanists may say: our Lord spoke in the Syriac-Chaldean language, which was called the common Hebrew, in which the distinction in gender is not so strongly marked. I reply, that St. Matthew was a Jew, and doubtlessly knew Greek as well as any of our Roman Catholic brethren, and when he wrote his gospel in the Greek language, he made a marked distinction between the words: he made the most marked distinction between the man and his confession that he could, in the energetic and critical language of the text. But the former view does not agree with truth, as it respects St. Peter. Is it true that St. Peter was the foundation of the church? If these words were spoken of his person, it is false; for scarcely three verses lower down, we find that "the gates of hell" did "prevail against" the church which was founded on St. Peter. Look to the 23rd ver. What was Christ's language to the foundation, on which a little before he had built his church? "Go behind me, satan, thou art a scandal unto me: because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men." May God have mercy on that church which has no better foundation! What a wreck of a church he made of it, if we are to believe our Roman Catholic brethren! I ask you, in all sobriety of mind, what kind of a church is satan? But I could soon render

Peter's infallibility vain. I could mention circumstances which would destroy it. But I refrain. I admire; I respect; I love, St. Peter; although he most certainly did commit the greatest errors. I do believe, however, that these very errors will yet, under God, become a means of enlightening the Roman Catholics on this subject. I believe that they have been handed down for that very purpose. Was it infallibility in Peter to deny his Master? Was it infallibility in Peter to commit the action recorded in Galatians ii., when St. Paul had to reprove him to his face? But I forbear. I have no desire to enlarge on this. But that he was liable to err, the second chapter of Galatians is full proof. There is another circumstance which determines me that St. Peter's person is not referred to, viz., in addition to the distinction in gender occurring in the wording of the text, the advocates of Peter's personal infallibility attack the *consistency* of our Lord, by making him speak (with the deepest reluctance I utter the expression) what was untrue. There is another point deserving attention. This passage is the only one in the entire Scriptures which can identify these words as applied to Peter. Now, if infallibility should go in a direct line from Peter to his successors,—if it were to be a perpetual grant to Rome, is it not extraordinary that so important a donation should be mentioned but *once* in the whole Bible? There are four gospels: two written by apostles, and two by apostolic men. St. Matthew is the only writer who records the words occurring in this passage. It is not so with respect to any other doctrine; every other doctrine is mentioned repeatedly in the sacred Scriptures.

St. Mark, as the ancient fathers assure us, wrote his

gospel under the superintendence of Simon Peter, and that it was confirmed by him. Now, observe, St. Mark does not mention the words conferring the grant; he simply gives our Lord's question to his apostles: "Whom do men say that I am?" and Peter's answer: "Thou art the Christ." viii. 29. There is not the remotest hint given of Peter's infallibility.

St. Luke, as the fathers likewise inform us, composed his gospel under the superintendence of St. Paul. It was regarded by them as the gospel which that great apostle himself preached. Now, it is worthy of remark, that neither Mark nor Luke mention the words, "Thou art Peter," &c.; both refer to St. Peter's answer, but not one word about *his* being the foundation of the church. If the church were to be founded on Peter's confession, there was no necessity for such a statement, because Scripture is unanimous in its declarations respecting Christ being the foundation of his church. But if it were to be founded on Peter, there was every necessity that the determination of our Lord on this point should be fully and clearly stated by *all* the evangelists.

St. John, the last of the sacred writers who composed the gospels,⁵ does not mention a word concerning the

5. The ancients assign two reasons especially for the writing of this gospel. . . . The other is, that he might supply those passages of the evangelical history which the rest of the sacred writers had omitted; and therefore collecting the other three evangelists, he first set to them his seal, ratifying the truth of them with his approbation, and then added his own gospel to the rest; wherein he chiefly insists upon the acts of Christ from the first commencement of his ministry to the death of John the Baptist, in which the others were most defective; and wherein he largely records his discourses, because some of them were passed by, but takes not so much notice of his miracles, because they were sufficiently related by the rest.—*Cave's Life of St. John, in Stackhouse's History of the Bible*—Ed.

transaction. How are we to account for this? It was no new thing to say, that Christ is the foundation of the church, and that he would not confer that honour upon any man; but it would indeed be a new thing to state that Christ is not the foundation of his church, having conferred that high dignity upon another.⁶ But I will grant the advocates of infallibility all that they claim. We will suppose that the passage does refer to Peter's person, and confers infallibility upon him, and also that the Church of Rome is founded on his person. Still, I want to know, what do these concessions effect for the Church of Rome? For, before I can acknowledge the claim, I require that certain points shall be fully proved. Romanists must prove—1. That St. Peter had a line of direct successors to his *peculiar* power: 2. That *he* was an apostle superior to the other apostles; and,

6. To sum up all on this point: the apostle might, with propriety, be styled, Petros, (Peter,) owing to his confession of that fundamental doctrine, 'The Messiahship of Jesus, on which Christ determined to build his church.' "'Thou art Peter, and I have so called you, because on the doctrine, which you have now confessed, I will build my church, as on a rock.' The solidity of a rock is an emblem, not of St. Peter, for his firmness was shaken, and, for a time, overthrown; but of the eternal stability of the gospel and its covenant. The gospel is an 'everlasting gospel.' The covenant of grace is an 'everlasting covenant.' Heaven and earth shall pass away, but 'the words of Christ shall not pass away.' The words, then, *Petros* and *Petra*, have a relative meaning; and in that relation consists the propriety of the name given to St. Peter. But the two words, when used in the *same sentence* as here, are necessarily distinguished from each other, and therefore must have their appropriate meanings; so that *Petros* cannot here mean *Petra*. With this distinction in view, it should ever be remembered, that our Saviour neither says, Thou art *Petra*, and on this *petra* I will build my church; nor on this *petros* I will build my church. And the reason is obvious; for petros, as distinguished from petra, being incapable of any other meaning than a *stone*, the church could not be said to be built on petros, a single stone; but either on many petri, which compose the foundation; or, on the rock which sustains them."—*Bp. St. David's Tracts*, p. 14.—Ed.

3. That his successors were superior to those of the other apostles. But we will suppose these points fully proved. There is yet a further difficulty: According to Romish tradition, Peter was Bishop of Antioch before he became Bishop of Rome. Then he must have had *two* lines of successors; one at Antioch, the other at Rome. I wish to know which of these inherited his infallibility. Am I to take the Antiochan or Roman line? It would be only justice to give the inheritance to his first successors, at Antioch. But we will suppose that St. Peter had successors at Rome who inherited his infallibility. There are yet other questions you must answer me, before I can acknowledge the claim you make. Is that succession *unbroken*? Have you had no schisms? Have you had no heresy? Have you had no profligacy? Have all your popes been *men of God*?

My dear brethren of the Church of Rome, the safest course for you to pursue is, to apply yourselves to the prayerful study of the Bible, which you acknowledge to be the word of God. True, you may say, but there is another word of God. Be it so: but if the written word of God prove a church to be false, tradition, or the unwritten word, cannot prove it true. Let us, then, be thankful that "we have the more firm prophetic word." Let us fly from all human authority, and "search the Scriptures;" for they will teach us *all* that is necessary for salvation; and may we all join from the heart in the confession of St. Peter: "Thou art Christ, the son of the living God."

I had nearly omitted mentioning a circumstance respecting the confession of St. Peter. When *we* give an explanation of Matt. xvi. 18, Roman Catholics say:

That is Protestant authority. Remember, they add, that we were in being for upwards of 1000 years before your forefathers protested against what you call the errors of Popery. They ask, What did the fathers think of that passage? We will go to the fathers. Now, Cyril of Alexandria, Ambrose, Hilary, Theodoret, Chrysostom, Augustine, St. Jerome, all agree with Protestants in explaining the passage as referring to the confession of Peter. I shall read you one or two extracts from St. Chrysostom, who flourished about A.D. 400, and from St. Augustine, who was Bishop of Hippo, in Africa, A.D. 410. St. Chrysostom writes: He did not say upon *petros*, for he did not found his church upon a man, but upon faith. What, therefore, means upon this *petra*? Upon the confession contained in his words: And I say unto you, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; that is to say, upon the *faith* of the *confession*. Chrysostom knew Greek too well to refer *taute te petra* to *su ei petros*. St. Augustine writes: This rock means not Peter, but Peter's confession. The church was built, not on the man, but on his faith, that is the meaning of the word rock. God built not his church upon men; God has built you upon him, not himself upon you, &c. Who could the church be built on? Surely, not on men, but upon CHRIST.⁷

7, Gildas, surnamed Sapiens, or the Wise, and Badonicus, from the battle of Baden, or Bath, about the time of his birth, A.D. 520. He was a well educated man, a monk of Bangor, and is said to have visited and laboured some time in Ireland. He spent some time in the northern parts of Britain, visited France and Italy, and returned and laboured as a faithful preacher.—*Murdock and Soame's Mosheim*.—He is the earliest British historian on record, and lived and wrote before the mission into

SERMON IV.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 21.

“Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.”

WE proceed to consider the claim for infallibility in the second point of view, as a question of *fact*. If infallibility were conferred in the words: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church,” it is impossible that the primitive church should have been unacquainted with the fact. But the primitive church knew of no such grant; for if you examine the writings of the early fathers, you will find that they make no mention of the grant. Is it possible, that, if there were an infallible guide in the church, it should, for three or four centuries, never have referred to it. I think this is sufficient proof that there was no such thing as infallibility known in the primitive church. But I shall endeavour to shew this by the following facts:

England of the Romish monk, Augustine. Gildas was a member of the *ancient national* church of Britain. He has the following remarks on our Lord's words to Peter: *Su ei petros*: “Thou art Peter,” &c. It is said to the true priest, ‘Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church.’ It is also promised unto every good priest: ‘Whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be likewise loosed in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be in like sort bound in heaven.’—It is plain from these words, that the *ancient national* church of Britain neither held the infallibility of Peter's person, nor that infallibility in any form was conferred on the Church of Rome by Christ, when he addressed Peter, in Matt. xvi. 18, 19.—ED.

Anicetus, a pious and excellent man, was Bishop of Rome, A.D. 157. An equally pious and excellent character, Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, came to Rome to visit Anicetus. Polycarp had conversed with apostolic men, and was peculiarly intimate with St. John, who had heard the words of Christ, which are claimed as the grant of infallibility conferred on St. Peter. Polycarp having conversed with St. John, if there had been any mention of infallibility must have heard it. We have got the infallible head of the church in Anicetus, and in Polycarp we have got an apostolic man. They met together, and they differed in opinion : they differed also in practice ; for it was the practice of the Eastern Churches to keep Easter on any day of the week it might happen to fall on. They used to keep it on the 14th day of the moon. At this time they used to end their fasts ; but the fasts of the primitive church were not like those which afterwards came into use. It was the custom of the earlier Christians to fast from the day on which Christ was crucified until the day on which he rose. Here, then, Anicetus, Bishop of Rome, and Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, differed ; for it was the custom of the Eastern Churches to keep Easter, or to end their fasts on any of the week the Jewish Passover might fall on. In the Western Churches, in the Church of Rome, it was customary to celebrate it on Sunday. Any day to which the Jewish Passover might correspond was not celebrated until the Sunday after. Polycarp followed the custom of the Eastern Churches, and he said he followed the practice of the apostles, and particularly the practice of St. John, who observed it on any day of

the week upon which it might fall.⁸ Polycarp differed here with the pope: he did not refer to the pope, in order that *he* should decide; and during the whole of the discussion there was not a word about infallibility. Yet, notwithstanding this difference, they both partook of the sacrament together, and Anicetus, out of compliment to his brother-bishop, clothed him with his own vestments, and allowed him to consecrate the elements.⁹ There was no claim made here for infallibility. If Anicetus had understood from the words of our Lord to Peter that infallibility was granted to him and his successors, would he not have said: 'Come to me, I am your infallible guide. I am supreme, unerring judge in matters of religion; refer to my authority, and agree with me, and you cannot err.'

Not many years after this event another transaction

8. "The Asiatic custom of celebrating the Passover had two great inconveniences which appeared intolerable to the other Christians, and especially to the Romans. First, by holding their sacred feast on the very day on which they supposed *Christ* ate the paschal lamb with his disciples. They interrupted the *fast* of the great week, which appeared to the other Christians to fall little short of a crime. Again, as they always kept the memorial of *Christ's* rising from the dead on the *third day* after their paschal supper, it unavoidably happened that they more commonly kept on some other day of the week than the first, or Sunday, called the Lord's-day, the festival of *Christ's* resurrection, which in after times was called, and is now called, the *Passover*, or *Easter*. Now, the greater part of the Christians deemed it wrong to consecrate any other than the Lord's-day, in remembrance of *Christ's* resurrection. Hence great contention frequently arose from this difference between the Asiatic and the other Christians. In the reign of *Antoninus Pius*, about the middle of this century (second), *Anicetus*, Bishop of Rome, and Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, discussed this question with great care at Rome. But the Asiatics could not be induced by any consideration to give up their custom, which they believed to be handed down to them from *St. John*," —*Soame's Mosheim*.—2. *Eusebius, E. H.*, l. v., c. 24.—ED.

took place. Victor was Bishop of Rome about the end of the second century, A.D. 192. This transaction was also respecting the observance of Easter, upon which Anicetus and Polycarp had before differed. The Eastern Churches still retained their own custom with respect to that feast, and Victor wanted to force them to the observance of the custom of the Western Church. The Eastern Church would not be forced by Victor. He called a council, and he, with his council, declared against the Eastern Churches. These wrote to Victor, told him the grounds they had for their observance of Easter, and said that they would not be forced by him into compliance, and that he had *no right* to compel them.¹⁰

It was the custom at that time, if any one, being a Christian, were going to another country, to procure a certificate from his bishop that he was a member of his communion, in order that he might be admitted into the church in the place whither he was going. When any

10. "Near the close of the century (second), *Victor*, Bishop of Rome, thought it necessary that the Asiatic Christians should be compelled, by laws and decrees, to follow the rules adopted by the greater part of the Christian world. Accordingly, after ascertaining the opinions of foreign bishops, he admonished the Asiatic bishops, in an imperious letter, to follow the example of other Christians in keeping Easter. They replied with spirit, by *Polycrates*, Bishop of Ephesus, that they would not depart from the holy institution of their ancestors. Irritated by this decision, *Victor* excluded them from his communion, and from that of his church, (not from that of the universal church, which he had not power to do,) that is, he pronounced them unworthy to be called his brethren. The progress of this disagreement was checked by *Irenaeus*, Bishop of Lyons, in letters wisely composed, directed to *Victor* and others, and by the Asiatic bishops, who wrote a long letter in their own justification. And thus both parties retained their respective customs, until the Council of Nice, in the fourth century, abrogated the Asiatic usage."—*Murdock's and Soume's Mosheim*.—ED.

church had fallen into error, it was customary to cut off its members from communion with other churches; and persons coming from that church were not admitted to church communion elsewhere. This was the original extent of excommunication.¹¹ This was all Victor could

11. How fearfully opposite in spirit *Papal* excommunication is to this simple primitive rite, the following form will show: It is called the "*Greater Excommunication*," and is as follows: "By command of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, of the blessed Mary, mother of our Lord Jesus Christ; of St. Michael, John the Baptist, and Peter and Paul, princes of the apostles, of St. Stephen, and all the martyrs, St. Sylvester, and all the confessors, St. Aldegond, and all the virgins, and all other the saints whatsoever, both in heaven or upon earth. We curse and cut off from the Holy Mother Church those who have done," (such and such a thing,) "or known of it, or advised it, or had a hand therein. Let them be cursed in their houses, their beds, their fields, their lands and their ways, and in their towns and villages. Let them be cursed in woods, and rivers, and churches; cursed in their lawsuits and quarrels; cursed in their prayers, in speaking, and in silence, in eating, and drinking, and sleeping, in watching, walking, standing, running, resting, and riding; cursed in hearing, seeing, and tasting; cursed in all their actions. Let this curse strike their heads, their eyes, and their whole body, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. I adjure thee, Satan, and all thy agents, by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to take no rest, either by day or night, until you have brought a temporal and eternal confusion upon them, by contriving the matter so, that they may be drowned, or hanged, or devoured by wild beasts, or torn by vultures or eagles, or consumed by fire, or killed by their enemies. Make them odious to all living creatures. Let their children be fatherless, and their wives widows. Let no body, for the time to come, help them, or take pity on their fatherless children. And as Lucifer was expelled from heaven, and Adam banished from paradise, let them likewise be expelled and banished from this world, being deprived of their estates; and let them be buried with the burial of an ass. Let them be partakers of the punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, of Judas, and Pontius Pilate, and of all those who say to the Lord their God: Get thee gone, we will have no knowledge of thy paths." (Afterwards, he who pronounced these imprecations, put out two lighted candles, and added these dreadful words:) "I adjure thee, Satan, and all thy agents, to extinguish the light of their eyes, as these candles are extinguished, unless they repent, and make full satisfaction. Amen. And now let it be so. Amen."—ED.

do : he could not get any other bishops to agree with him in cutting off the Eastern Churches ; on the contrary, it raised a strong opposition to him. The bishops of other churches wrote to him, expostulating with him on his conduct, and *obliged him to give it up*. Nay, according to Eusebius, several of them *sharply rebuked* him. Did they know he was the infallible head, and could not do wrong? Did he know it himself? No! in the whole course of the controversy there was not the remotest hint given of the existence of such a donation to the see of Rome.

I shall now direct your attention to another circumstance which occurred when Stephen was Bishop of Rome, A.D. 253. We have now come down to the middle of the third century. At this period the fire of persecution was raging in all its fury. And many who had professed the Christian faith renounced it, in order to escape the cruel tortures and death inflicted by their ruthless persecutors. A dispute now arose concerning the rebaptism of the *lapsed* ; whether, on their desiring to be restored to church-fellowship, it was necessary to baptise them again. The Bishop of Rome would not baptise again ; but St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, was in the habit of rebaptising. Here we have a diversity of practice. Stephen, a high and haughty man, determining to oppose Cyprian and the Church of Carthage, convened a council and condemned both. Cyprian assembled another council at Carthage, in which it was resolved to adhere to their original decision—rebaptism of the *lapsed*. Stephen's anger now waxed heavier, and he excommunicated the African bishops, with Cyprian at their head. This produced a great commotion through-

out the churches, all protesting against Stephen's conduct, and saying that he wanted to act the tyrant over the church. In this transaction there is a variety of extraordinary proceedings, but not the slightest trace of infallibility throughout the whole affair. Thus, up to the time of Stephen and Cyprian, we have found no infallibility in the Church of Rome.

We now come down to 80 years after St. Cyprian, to the fourth century, A.D. 325. In that year the first general council was assembled at Nice, by order of the Emperor Constantine, for the purpose of putting down the Arian heresy, which had crept into the church. Now, I cannot account for the convocation of this council, or for the assembly of those bishops at the public expense, if there were such a thing as infallibility in the church. Athanasius states, that there were above 300 bishops assembled together. Now, if the Christian Church knew of any infallibility; if it were known to Constantine, when he assembled the council; if it were known to the 300 bishops who were assembled together, what an absurdity it was in the emperor to convene the council, and in the bishops to assemble, if the pope could decide the matter at once! Does he say: 'Hold no council; make no decrees; I will decide the differences; come before me; I am infallible; I will decree what is necessary'? No such thing. The Bishop of Rome was summoned to attend the council; but being an aged man, he was unable to attend in person, so he sent two presbyters in his stead. So little did he know of his infallibility.

But is there *no* difference of opinion respecting the exact position of infallibility in the Church of Rome?

In fact, it would require infallibility to disentangle infallibility from the obscurity in which it is involved! I shall now show you, from the most eminent writers in the Church of Rome, the different opinions respecting infallibility. First, as to *what* it is: next, as to *where* it is. There is a great diversity of sentiment respecting these two points; at the same time they all state, in general, that their church *is* infallible, though, in particular, they differ on these two points. Among the advocates of infallibility some maintain that the Pope is infallible; others, that councils are infallible. But all agree in stating that the Pope may err in all things which do not concern matters of faith and religion. Others differ from these, and say that he is infallible as to the right, and not to the fact. As to what is a matter of right, he is infallible in giving his opinion; as to matters of fact, he is, like all other men, fallible. A third party say that he is infallible in giving his opinion in matters of fact revealed, but not in matters of fact which are not revealed. Others, on the contrary, say that the Pope is infallible in all things!¹² Here you perceive

12. "With what congruity, then, doth the Church of Rome deny that her enemies, whom she holdeth always for heretics, do at all appertain to the Church of Christ; when her own do freely grant, that albeit the Pope (as they say) cannot teach heresy, nor propound error, he may notwithstanding himself worship idols, think amiss concerning matters of faith, yea, give himself unto acts diabolical, even being Pope? How exclude they us from being any part of the Church of Christ under the colour and pretence of heresy, when they cannot but grant it possible even for him to be, as touching his own personal persuasion, heretical, who, in their opinion not only is of the church, but holdeth the chiefest place of authority over the same?"—*Hooker's Eccles. Pol. l. iii. c. i. § 13.*

"At this time, how deformed, how frightful was the face of the Church of Rome! The Holy See was fallen under the tyranny of two loose and disorderly women, who placed and displaced bishops

are four different views placed before you by writers of the Church of Rome with respect to infallibility.

Unity is the boast of Rome! Yet, here, you perceive are four different opinions respecting infallibility. Suppose a member of the Church of Rome, believing that I was in the wrong, and being very anxious that my soul should be saved, should come to me and say: My dear

as their humour led them; and, what I tremble to think and speak of, they placed their gallants upon St. Peter's chair, who did not deserve so much as the very name of Popes. For who dare say, that these infamous persons, who intruded without any form of justice, were lawful Popes? We do not find that they were chosen by the clergy; or that they consented in the least to their election. All the canons of councils were infringed, the decrees of Popes trampled under foot, the ancient traditions despised, the customs and ceremonies usually observed in the election of Popes neglected, and the Holy See became a prey to avarice and ambition."—*Dupin, Cent. 10, c. 2.—From Cardinal Baronius' Annals, ad ann. 900.*

"This man, Sergius III. is esteemed a monster, not only for his ambition and the violent proceedings he was guilty of, but also on account of his loose morals. He had a bastard by Marosia,* the daughter of Theodora, who being a long time before in the favour of Adelbert,"—Marquis of Tuscany, by whom she had a son, Alberic,—"bore a great sway in Rome. This bastard son of his was afterwards promoted to the Popedom by the intrigues of this Marosia, and took upon him the name of John XI."—*Dupin, vol. 2, p. 158.*

"The Popedom of Anastasius did not last above two years and some few months; after whose death Landon was promoted to the chair (of St. Peter), no doubt by the interest of Theodora. For that wicked woman made use of him to prefer one of her favourites, named John, to the archbishoprick of Ravenna.—*Ibid, p. 157. N.B.*—This wretch was afterwards Pope John X. who fell by means similar to those through which he arose.

John XII. "This man was a monster in debauchery and irregularity."—*Ibid.* "His name was before Octavian: he was one who, from his youth up, had been debauched with all manner of wickedness: and if he had any time to spare from his lusts, he spent it in hunting, and not in prayer. Some, indeed, write that this wicked wretch, or monster rather, was taken in adultery, and there stabbed."—*Platina, who counts him John XIII.—Ed.*

* Marosia raised to the Popedom her bastard son by Sergius, who took the name of Pope John XI. "A monster of a Pope," says Dupin.

friend, I am exceedingly anxious that your soul should be saved. You are in danger, leave your church and come over to ours. We have an infallible guide in matters of faith and religion ; we cannot err. My reply would be : My kind friend, I am very thankful to you for your anxiety respecting my spiritual welfare ; but I must say, that I think my church has more of the spirit of Christianity than yours ; and with respect to infallibility, I cannot see what it is. I have here four different opinions concerning it, and *how* am I to decide ? I must take the heretical manner of plain Protestants, and use my own judgment, and if I do so truly, I know it will end in my rejecting them all !

The next point for consideration is : *where* infallibility is seated. Respecting this there are likewise *four* different opinions. Here, again, behold more of Rome's boasted union ! Some maintain that in the Pope alone is the seat of infallibility. Others say it resides in a general council. The Italian Church places it in the Pope. The Gallican, or French Church, places it in a general council.

There is a third opinion, that infallibility is found where a Pope and general council agree. Those who maintain this opinion are not satisfied that infallibility should be placed in the Pope alone, or in the general council alone ; but by uniting both they consider they have secured it. Here, say they, is infallibility, when the bishops, with the Pope at their head, agree in what they define and ordain.

The fourth opinion is, that infallibility exists when the church representative agrees with the church diffusive. That is to say, when the whole body of bishops

and higher clergy agree in their decision with the whole body of the lower clergy and laity. Now, should I ask where infallibility is, I should be told it is in the Pope. No, no, exclaims another party, it is in the council. Not at all, cries a third, it is in the council, with the Pope at its head. A fourth says: All these may err: Infallibility is in none of these. It exists where the church representative agrees with the church diffusive. I have not brought forward anything from Protestant authority. I have taken all from the most eminent doctors of the Church of Rome. Such a diversity of opinions, such an opposition in sentiments, between members of that church, with respect to a most vital and important doctrine! Behold, here, the *boasted unity of Rome!* We have seen there are four points on which they disagree with respect to *what* it is, and four points on which they disagree with respect to *where* it is. O, give up these diversities of opinion: take the holy word of God; take your own Douay Bible: read it with solemnity; read it with attention; but above all, read it with fervent prayer that the Holy Spirit would enable you to understand it. Away with all these diversities; away with everything that can blind the understanding; away with everything that can hinder you in your course towards God! Take, again I entreat you, take the holy book of God; pray that the Holy Spirit, who indited that sacred book, would graciously cause you to understand it; and rest assured that the blessed Jesus will hear your prayers, if they be sincere; for He hath said: "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."*

* John vi. 37.

SERMON V.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 21.

“Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.”

IN this and the following discourse we shall examine the four opinions respecting the seat of infallibility. And I trust we shall be able to prove that infallibility has no existence either in the Pope or council, or in the Church of Rome at large. *First opinion*: Infallibility is seated in the Pope personally. In opposition to this there are strong facts recorded. I. Popes have been deposed by councils of their own church. At the commencement of century xv. the Latin church was governed by two heads, or popes, Boniface IX., at Rome, and Benedict XIII., who resided at Avignon. On the death of Boniface, A.D. 1404, he was succeeded by Innocent VII. He filled the papal chair two years; and after his death Gregory XII. became pope. Both pontiffs promised, under a solemn oath, to resign the pontificate voluntarily, if the welfare of the church should require it, but both violated their pledge. In order to end this deplorable schism, the Council of Pisa was convened, A.D. 1409. It passed a severe sentence on both popes; declaring them to be heretical, perjured, obstinate, and unworthy of any honours; and *excommunicated* them from the church, and in their place elected Peter de Candia pope, who assumed the name of Alexander V. The Council of Constance, A.D. 1414, deposed John XXIII., and Bene-

dict XIII., and elected instead Otto de Colonna, who became Pope Martin V.¹³

II. There have been rival popes. For the space of fifty years, from A.D. 1378 to A.D. 1428, the Church of

13. "At the commencement of the century, (xv.) the Latin Church had two heads, or two pontiffs, *Boniface IX.*, at Rome, and *Benedict XIII.*, resident at Avignon. On the death of *Boniface*, the cardinals of his party elected, A.D. 1404, *Cosmat de Meliorati*, who took the name of *Innocent VII.* And he dying after two years, or A.D. 1406, his place was filled by *Angelo Corradi*, a Venetian, who assumed the name of *Gregory XII.* Both of them promised, under oath, that they would voluntarily resign the pontificate if the interests of the church should require it; and each of them violated his pledge. *Benedict XIII.*, being besieged at Avignon by the King of France, A.D. 1406, fled into Catalonia, his native province, and thence removed to Perpignan. Hence eight or nine cardinals of his party, finding themselves deserted by their pontiff, joined the cardinals of the party of *Gregory XII.*, and in conjunction with them, for the purpose of ending at last the protracted schism, appointed a council of the whole church to be held at Pisa, on the 25th of March, A.D. 1409. But this council, which was designed to heal the wounds of the divided church, unexpectedly inflicted upon her a new wound. On the 5th of June, it passed a heavy sentence on each of the pontiffs; for it declared them both to be heretical, perjured, and unworthy of any honours, and excommunicated them from the church. And in place of them, on the 26th of June, the council created *Peter de Candia* sovereign pontiff; and he assumed the name of *Alexander V.* But the two pontiffs spurned the decrees of this council; and continued still to perform their functions. *Benedict* held a council at Perpignan; and *Gregory* assembled another at Austria, near Aquileia; but fearing the resentment of the Venetians, he went first to Cajeta, where he threw himself upon the protection of *Ladislau*, King of Naples; and then fled, A.D. 1412, to Rimini."—*Murdoch and Soame's Mosheim*.—ED.

"The principal object of this great council (Constance) was to extinguish the discord between the pontiffs; and this business was accomplished successfully. For having established by two solemn decrees, in the fourth and fifth sessions, that a pontiff is subject to a council of the whole church; and having most carefully substantiated the authority of councils, the fathers, on the 29th of May, A.D. 1415, removed *John XXIII.* from the pontificate, on account of various offences and crimes: for he had pledged himself to the council, to resign the pontificate, and yet withdrew himself by flight. *Gregory XII.* voluntarily resigned his pontificate, on the 4th of July, in the same year, through *Charles de Malatesta*. And *Benedict XIII.*, on the 14th of July,

Rome presented the monstrous anomaly of a body with two or three heads.* This was called *the great western schism*. Could these two or three heads be infallible? Could these two or three heads be the Vicars-General of the Church of Christ upon earth? Could the Spirit of God dwell in these popes, or antipopes, contending with each other, and hurling their anathemas against each other?¹⁴

1417, was deprived of his rank as a pontiff, by a solemn decree of the council. After these transactions, on the 11th of November, A.D. 1417, *Otto de Colonna* was elected pontiff by the unanimous suffrages of the cardinals, and assumed the name of *Martin V. Benedict XIII.*, who resided at Perpignan, resisted indeed, and claimed the rights and the dignity of a pontiff till his death, A.D. 1423; and after the death of this obstinate man, under the auspices of *Alphonsus*, King of Sicily, *Giles Mugnos*, a Spaniard, was appointed to succeed him, by only two cardinals. He assumed the name of *Clement VIII.*, and wished to be regarded as the legitimate pontiff; but in the year 1429 he was persuaded to resign the government of the church entirely to *Martin V.*—*Murdock and Soame's Mosheim*.—Ed.

* Truly, monstrum horrendum, et terribile visu.—Ed.

14. "Thus the unity of the Latin Church, as existing under one head, came to an end at the death of *Gregory XI.*; and that most unhappy disunion ensued, which is usually denominated *the great schism of the west*. For during fifty years the church had two or three heads; and the contemporary pontiffs assailed each other with excommunications, maledictions, and insidious measures. The calamities and distress of those times are indescribable. For besides the perpetual contentions and wars between the pontifical factions, which were ruinous to great numbers, involving them in the loss of life or of property, nearly all sense of religion was in many places extinguished, and wickedness daily acquired greater impunity and boldness; the clergy, previously corrupt, now laid aside even the appearance of piety and godliness, while those who called themselves Christ's vicegerents were at open war with each other; and the conscientious people, who believed that no one could be saved without living in subjection to Christ's vicegerent, were thrown into the greatest perplexity and anxiety of mind. Yet both the church and the state received very considerable advantages from these great calamities. For the very sinews of pontifical power were cut by these dissensions, and no art could heal them any more; kings, too, and princes, who had before been in a sense the servants of

III. There is a circumstance with respect to the popes mentioned in ecclesiastical history : POPE has *contradicted* POPE. I shall give you a few out of many instances. Clement I., in a work on Consecration, (of the Eucharist,) (and surely we cannot be wrong, when we take the authority of a work written by an author gifted with infallibility,) Clement, in this work, has directed that if too much of the *bread* should be consecrated ; that is, if more than was sufficient for the use of the people were consecrated, it should not be left, but be eaten by the priest. But Urban IV., in opposition to this, enacted, that the bread which remained should be carried in procession annually through the public streets. Afterwards the Council of Trent, sanctioned by Pope Pius IV., (There were, indeed, four popes who sanctioned it, but three died during the course of its proceedings. I therefore mention Pope Pius IV.) This council pronounced an anathema upon what Clement I. had enacted. Thereby it *curse*d Clement I. Here we have pope contradicting pope. Popes Urban IV. and Pius IV. *against* Clement I. Can there be infallibility here ?

Innocent I., Pope of Rome, in the fifth century, was a strenuous opponent of the heretic Pelagius, who denied the corruption of man's heart, and the existence of original sin. At that period it was believed that it was

the pontiffs, now became their judges and masters. Moreover, great numbers, possessing some measure of discernment, despising and disregarding pontiffs, fighting for dominion, committed themselves and their salvation to God alone, in full assurance that the church and religion might be safe, and continue so, although without any visible head."—*Murdock and Soame's Mosheim*.—ED

absolutely necessary to the attainment of salvation that all should partake of the Lord's supper, and therefore it was administered even to infants. Innocent undertook to prove the errors of Pelagius from this custom; and from the then universally believed necessity of even *infants* partaking of the holy supper, he argued the corruption of man's heart. Now, in the deliberate and openly recorded judgment of Innocent I., children could not be saved unless they partook of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. I believe Pope Innocent was fearfully wrong. Still, however, that has nothing to do with the fact, that in Innocent's judgment the administration of that sacrament was necessary to the salvation of *infants*. The point I wish to draw your attention to is this: Pope Pius IV., with the Council of Trent, decreed that, "Whosoever shall say that there is a necessity for children partaking of the sacrament before they come to years of discretion, let him be Anathema Maranatha." Here, again, we have one pope cursing another.

IV. In century vi., John, Patriarch of Constantinople, claimed for himself the title of Universal Bishop. After Constantine had transferred the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople, a most unchristian dispute was carried on between the bishops of Constantinople and the bishops of Rome with respect to the title of Universal Bishop. The Patriarch of Constantinople then was John the Faster, so called from his long and frequent fasts. He was laying claim to the title; in opposition to which Pope Pelagius II. wrote, that John, in his pride, had not only exalted himself above the rest of the faithful, but had made himself the forerunner of Anti-Christ. He had not only departed from the faith,

but he had exalted his own power above the power of Pelagius. Gregory the Great, who succeeded Pope Pelagius, in a letter to the Emperor Mauritius, writes : I do confidently say, that whoever doth call himself œcumenical or universal bishop, or doth suffer himself so to be called, is, in his pride, the forerunner of Anti-Christ. Here we have Gregory the Great and Pope Pelagius joining in saying that the title of Universal Bishop was impious, and the person who assumed it was the forerunner of Anti-Christ. Now observe : in the year 606, but a few years after Popes Pelagius and Gregory had so unequivocally written against the title of Universal Bishop, Boniface III. obtained from Phocas, an usurper and murderer, the title of Universal Bishop. Thus Boniface III., directly in opposition to Popes Pelagius and Gregory, aspired to the office of Universal Bishop. We shall mention another subject worthy of notice : A.D. 1590, Pope Sixtus V. published an edition of the Latin Vulgate Bible, which he declared to be *immaculate*—free from all errors. But about A.D. 1592, just two years after, Clement VIII. published another *corrected* edition of the Bible, which he also pronounced *immaculate*. Dr. James, on comparing the two editions, discovered that there were above 2,000 *variations* between them.

V. There is a fact fully authenticated, and deeply deplored, by writers of the Church of Rome, viz. : Popes have been *heretics*. (I assure you I have no pleasure in mentioning these things : I take no pleasure in depreciating the character of the dead ; but when these characters are held up to us as infallible, we must either admit the fact, or not admit it ; and if we do not admit

it, we must quietly and calmly examine their real character.) Liberius was pope of Rome, A.D. 352. He was at first a firm opponent of the Arians, for which he was banished to Berœa, in Thrace. But at the close of his second year of exile his desire to return to the enjoyment of his papal dignity induced him to yield his consent to the condemnation of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, a powerful opposer of the Arian heresy, and to subscribe to the Arian creed put forth by the third Council of Sirmium. Honorius was pope of Rome, A.D. 626. He was condemned by the Council of Constantinople as a heretic, having held the errors of Eutyches, a presbyter of Constantinople, who taught that there was *only one* nature in Christ, viz. : that of the *word*, who became incarnate. The Council of Constance condemned John XXIII. for, among other charges, denying the immortality of the soul. He was an Atheist. The Council of Constance is witness for that : Platina is witness for that : the whole Roman Catholic Church is witness for that. Yet *he was*—O monstrous blasphemy! *he was*—the *infallible* HEAD of our *blessed Redeemer's Church upon earth* ! Here, then, have we seen popes deposed by councils ! We have seen popes against popes ! We have seen popes contradicting popes ! We have seen that popes have been heretics ! Now, I ask you, is there anything like infallibility in *all this* ?

Second opinion : Infallibility is seated in a council. There exists a difference of opinion as to *when* councils exert their infallibility. This is a fatal objection to conciliar infallibility. It is the opinion of some that a council is infallible when it is *universal*. No such thing as a *strictly* universal council has ever as yet existed in the

Church of Christ ; consequently, there has never as yet been an infallible council. But all the advocates of conciliar infallibility agree in saying that there are two points absolutely necessary to constitute a council infallible. 1. *It must be called by the Pope.* 2. *It must be a lawful one.* Now, I might detain you here till morning with explanations of this word, *lawful*. It is a complexity—a complexity of perplexity, that we should never resolve. Another requisition in an infallible council is, that it should be *free* : that is, the individuals who compose the council should not be warped in their judgment by any *means* whatever. We have a fair criterion to judge by in this point, afforded to us in the Council of Trent, A.D. 1546. The members of that council did everything that was pleasing to the Pope. All their decisions and deliberations were sent ready prepared from Rome. This is what Father Paul, a Roman Catholic writer, states. They were not allowed to discuss anything which had not first come from the Church of Rome. Fourthly. With the fathers of the Church of Rome, *a right intention* is necessary in an infallible council. Now, pray, how can I get at the hearts of individuals? I cannot get at my own heart ; how, then, can I get at the hearts of 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, or 300 individuals? Each one has a right to know the intention of those who, with himself, compose the council. Thus every one may deny its validity, for who can know the intentions of the persons who compose it? Fifthly. The council should decide nothing without a sufficient enquiry : they should have no decision without a discussion. The twenty-fifth session of the Council of Trent will give us a clue to judge how this is done. In the

space of scarcely two days matters of great importance were hurried over with an indecency and disorder which even Roman Catholics lamented. There is yet another point necessary, viz. : The proceedings should be carried on, and decisions made, with perfect unanimity. Now, in such a combination of different men as must form a council, is it possible that there should be no dissentient voice ? If such attributes as these are necessary to form a proper council, any one whatever may deny the infallibility of any council. But there is no such thing with the simple word of God. Never mind popes or councils ; you have a more sure word of prophecy, to which you will do well to take heed, 2 Peter i. 19.

I perceive the time warns me to conclude. I shall, therefore, content myself with offering a few remarks respecting the infallibility of councils. The Council of Nice was convened, not by Pope Sylvester, but by the Emperor Constantine, A.D. 325, in order to put an end to the Arian heresy. In this council, after great disputings on the part of the bishops, they condemned the doctrines of Arius ; pronounced Christ *homoousios, of the same nature* with the Father. Arius was banished, and his followers were compelled to subscribe to a creed composed by the council. An Arian council, A.D. 341, erased that word from the creed. The Council of Rimini, (Ariminum), A.D. 359, at which were present 600 bishops, acted in the same manner, struck that word out, and composed an Arian creed. Eutyches, abbot of a monastery at Constantinople, A.D. 448, broached his erroneous doctrines, for which he was condemned by the Council of Chalcedon, the fourth general council, consisting of 416 bishops. Another council, A.D. 499, condemned the

decision of Chalcedon. Constantine Copronymus, Emperor of Constantinople, assembled a council, A.D. 754, to examine and decide the controversy respecting image-worship. In this council, which is reckoned by the Greeks the seventh general council, the worship of images was condemned. The second Council of Nice, convened by the Empress Irene, A.D. 786, established the worship of images, and of the cross, and abrogated the decrees of the Council of Constantinople. Charlemagne, emperor of the Franks, A.D. 794, assembled a council of 300 bishops at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, in which image-worship was forbidden. Delegates from the Pope were present, but Charlemagne presided. The decisions of the second Nicene Council were disapproved of.

We have here councils opposing and condemning councils. Where, I ask you, shall we find infallibility in councils? My dear Roman Catholic brethren, I entreat you, take up your Bibles, the infallible word of God: read them with prayer and humility. That precious book contains *all* that is necessary to salvation. Pray that the Holy Spirit may enlighten your understanding; and may our glorious Redeemer enrich you with the choicest blessings of His salvation here, and hereafter grant you an abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

SERMON VI.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 21.

“ Prove all things : hold fast that which is good.”

Third opinion.—We proceed to consider the remaining two opinions, that we may learn whether, in fact, Infallibility resides in the pope and general council, or in the whole body of the Church of Rome. Here, however, we shall soon find that there is a great deal of difficulty in arriving at a fixed point, and saying : Now I have got a firm footing. For it is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain what meaning is attached to the phrase, “ General Council,” and the whole subject is involved in much obscurity. It may mean a complete representation by bishops, according to dioceses, or by archbishops, according to provinces, or, if you wish to reduce it still further, it may mean a few men, bishops and archbishops, called forth to represent the Church. As, for example, in the first General Council of Nice, convened by Constantine, one bishop, Hosius, bishop of Cordova, represented the whole kingdom of Spain. If more than this is meant by a general council, there never was a general council in the Church of Rome : never lived a pope who headed such a council : and therefore infallibility is not lodged in general councils. It may be said, that by a general council is not meant *such* a complete representation of the Christian Church. If it be not, have we got

any landmark by which we can guide our way here? Is it a very large number of bishops? No, for every council, consisting of a large number of bishops, is not acknowledged as a general council by the Church of Rome. She recognises but eighteen general councils. I could mention councils consisting of a very extensive number of bishops, which, I believe, that church does not acknowledge as general.* The Council of Frankfort, assembled by Charlemagne, A.D. 794, consisted of 300 bishops, and two legates sent by the pope. The Council of Pisa, A.D. 1409, (there were different councils held at Pisa, so, to prevent mistakes, I give you the date) consisted of 180 bishops, 300 abbots, 120 doctors of divinity, and 300 lawyers. Now, if this council, which consisted of such a number of bishops, divines, and lawyers, be not a general council, where are we to look for such? Are we to suppose that a large number of bishops, assembled from different countries, form a general council? Are we to suppose that a few compose a general council? What *are* we to suppose? We do not know: there is no standard: there is no landmark. Pope Gregory VII., as authoritative and dictatorial a pope as ever filled St. Peter's chair, declared, in those celebrated propositions, which, from his name, are termed the *Dictates of Hildebrand*: this imperious pontiff decreed: "That no council without his," the pope's, "order, is to be accounted a general council." Now observe where this places Pope Gregory VII. If his *dictate* be true, then *eight* councils, which are acknowledged by the Church of Rome as *general*, are *not* so. The two councils held at Nice—one

* See on this subject, *Taylor's Dissuasive from Popery*, p. 157-70.

convened by the Emperor Constantine ; the second summoned by the Empress Irene : two councils assembled at Constantinople by the then reigning power—are declared to be no councils. If, with the haughty and imperious Hildebrand, you say there are no general councils except those which are summoned by the pope, you have only ten general councils, whereas the Church of Rome acknowledges *eighteen*. But to proceed. I need not inform you that in the sacred Scriptures an *oath* is considered as a solemn compact which cannot be broken : “Thou shalt not forswear thyself : but thou shalt perform thy oaths to the Lord.”* I shall mention some passages of Scripture which establish the importance of an oath : Numbers xxx. 2, Levit. xix. 12, Psalm xv. 4, Zech. viii. 17. These are a very few out of a great number of passages which might be adduced to prove the importance of observing an oath. According to the Scriptures, then, he who maketh an oath is bound to perform it. But the Church of Rome teaches a *contrary* doctrine. The third General Council of Lateran, A.D. 1179, presided over by Pope Alexander III., in canon 16th, decreed : “That all oaths which are adverse to the utility of the church, and the institutions of the holy fathers, are to be unscrupulously violated, inasmuch as they are to be deemed perjuries rather than oaths.” So that if a man take an oath which can be constructed into anything against the interests of the church, it is not an oath, but a perjury. The same doctrine was taught by the Council of Constance, A.D. 1414 : That if an oath be against the interests of the Church, it is to be broken as a matter of

* Matthew v. 33.

duty. There is a melancholy and painful circumstance connected with this infamous dogma. *John Huss*, a native of Bohemia, commenced preaching against Romish error, A.D. 1408. He was summoned to appear before the Council of Constance. He went there on the faith of a *safe-conduct* from Sigismund, emperor of Germany, in which, *under a solemn* oath, he swore that no evil should happen to him. In full reliance upon this, John Huss came to Constance, stood before the council to vindicate his cause; but the council declared the *safe-conduct* of Sigismund to be *null and void* from the beginning. Huss was condemned as a heretic, and was burned alive, July 6th, A.D. 1415. I could produce further evidence on this point, but I refrain. The above is proof that a pope and general council have *erred*. Therefore, it is plain that a pope and general council are not infallible. I might produce a number of instances in which councils with popes have erred. Some of their councils may certainly not be called general, but they were at least very extensive. The Council of Constance, A.D. 1414, decided that a council is above a pope. Pope Martin V. confirmed that decree. The fifth Lateran Council, called by Pope Julius II., A.D. 1512, and, when he died, continued under his successor, Leo X., decreed entirely contrary to what had been previously passed at Constance. By the Lateran decree the pope was declared to be above a council. Here we have pope and council *against* pope and council. In the midst of such disagreement as this, let me ask you where infallibility is to be met with? Where is it to be found?

Fourth opinion.—As I am anxious not to weary your attention, I shall proceed to the examination of the last

seat of infallibility, which some divines of the Church of Rome place in the church representative, in agreement with the church diffusive. Now, I believe, I can prove that the Church of Rome, virtually, and in its whole extent, both church representative and church diffusive, has erred. The Church of Rome boasts that she is unchanged and unchangeable. (*Semper eadem* is her motto.) But that she is both changed and changeable the following facts will show. It was the practice in the early Church of Rome to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper to children; that is, they practised infant communion. This is proved by a pope. Innocent I., in his 24th epistle, states, that it was the practice in his time, A.D. 402—17, but, it is *not* the practice *now*. In this respect, at least, the whole church, head and members, clergy and laity, has *changed*. The Council of Trent, A.D. 1545, with Pope Pius IV. at its head, pronounced an *anathema* against all who say that children should receive the holy communion before they come to years of discretion. I think they were right, but they should not have put a *curse* to it. This early practice of the Church of Rome was erroneously founded upon the declaration of our Lord: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you."—John vi. 54.—This was the practice of the Church of Rome for upwards of 1000 years. She does not believe it *now*. If this practice of the Church of Rome were right then, she is wrong to give it up, and if it were wrong while it was her practice, she is not infallible. Now, observe, I have not given you a single particle of Protestant authority. These facts were

mostly written long before Protestantism made a noise in the world ; though the fact is, what is called Protestantism was the religion of the primitive church. *All* that the Protestants did, was to go back to first principles.

There is another point to be noticed : at one time the Church of Rome rejected St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. St. Jerome, who was canonised as a saint by the Church of Rome, says : " She—the church—rejects it, but I receive it, following the authority of the ancient fathers, and of the primitive church." Here are two facts to be attended to. In St. Jerome's time the Church of Rome rejected the Epistle to the Hebrews ; she now receives it, and for centuries back has received it. She was either in error when she rejected it, or she has been in error since. There is a painful reason for the Church of Rome's rejection of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the fourth century the Church of Rome was in heresy. The Church of Rome had embraced Arianism. Pope Liberius was an Arian. He believed that our Lord Jesus Christ was not the Son of God, and he subscribed an Arian creed. *Platina*, a divine of the Church of Rome, Apostolical Abbreviator, and author of the Lives of the Popes, informs us, that at one period the Church of Rome was *Arian*. She is not so now : she is now as orthodox a church on that doctrine as ours is. Here, then, most decidedly is fallibility. She must have been fallible when she received the doctrines of Arius ; or, is she fallible now that she believes in the divinity of Christ?

There is another circumstance to which I desire to draw your attention. You have all, most probably, seen

the Creed of Pope Pius IV. It was committed to the Pope, by the Council of Trent, to form a certain authentic work—a Prayer Book, founded on the doctrines of the Church of Rome. Pope Pius IV. drew up this Missal; in it you will find his creed.—You will also see it in a book called a “*Manual of Controversies*”—a work in circulation a few years ago; it is also to be found in Butler’s “*Book of the Church*.” That creed consists of 24 articles: the first twelve of which are agreeable to the faith of Protestants. And I consider it a fortunate, I should more correctly say, a providential circumstance, that AMEN was added to the TWELFTH article, to shew that the ancient creed terminated at the *amen*. After this *amen* follow *twelve* other articles, which were got up by the Council of Trent, A.D. 1545—1563. The Council of Nice, A.D. 325, formed the *first twelve*. And for 1220 years there were only these twelve articles. Then the Council of Trent assembled and added twelve more. But it was honest, it was upright, in Pope Pius IV. to place the *amen* at the conclusion of the *first twelve*. That document bears upon the face of it the *undeniable* fact, that at *one* period the Church of Rome was content with *twelve* articles of belief: *now*, she has *twenty-four*. Here, surely, is *change*; here, surely, is FALLIBILITY!

There are four documents, all of which are included in the first two centuries. Three of these are of divine authority—three divinely inspired. According to the statement of Roman Catholic writers, the Church of Rome was founded by St. Peter and St. Paul. (That they were its founders, I believe, is an error: they perhaps arranged it after it was founded.) But we will suppose they were its founders. St. Paul wrote a letter

to that church—his Epistle to the Romans. St. Peter, who, according to the Church of Rome's teaching, was their first pope, wrote two epistles. (Romish writers inform us that Peter wrote his epistles from Rome.) Here you have got two inspired apostles, the founders, as you assert, of the Church of Rome; one of whom was St. Paul. Did not St. Paul know the doctrines of the Church of Rome? The other is your first pope, as you claim, St. Peter. Did not he know what the doctrines of the Church of Rome were? We have also got the letter of St. Clement, who was the third bishop of Rome, towards the end of the first century. Here we have got four authentic epistles, all calculated to teach us what were the doctrines of the Church of Rome then. All these documents are accessible. In the sacred Scriptures you have St. Peter's and St. Paul's Epistles; that of St. Clement's is also extant. But let us suppose that it is not extant; it is the only one of the four which is uninspired, and therefore can most easily be spared. Now you have in your own Rhemish Testament St. Paul's epistle to you, and St. Peter's epistles written, according to your own assertion, *from* you. Surely, then, we shall find what were the doctrines of the church in *their* time. There has been published at the end of the Rhemish Testament what was called a Table of Controversies, but now called a Table of References. I have very carefully examined the Table: In the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, and in the two Epistles of St. Peter, there are 24 chapters, and 599 verses; and out of these three epistles, how many verses do you think I found quoted in that table of references? *Six* verses—six appeals, in support of Romish doctrines! Now let me ask, if the

doctrines of the Church of Rome, existing at the time when St. Peter and St. Paul wrote their valuable epistles, are the same with the doctrines of the Church of Rome now, is it possible, is it probable, that Roman Divines could only find *six* passages to prove their doctrines ?

I would now state, that in calling your attention to the Infallibility of the Church of Rome, I did so with the feeling that it is the vital point at issue between us. You know that if the Church of Rome be infallible, it is our bounden duty to flee from all schism and heresy, and prostrate ourselves at her feet. But if she be not infallible, we have nothing to do but to use our own judgment. We are then our own masters, and are at liberty to "hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the sacred Scriptures, and form our rule of faith and practice by them. We saw, in the first place, that there were a great number of very strong presumptions against the doctrine of infallibility. We saw that its advocates brought their claim to Scripture. We examined the passages they brought forward, and found that they did not bear the interpretation put on them. Ecclesiastical history also proved that there was no such thing ; for it contains details of popes contradicting popes, and popes and councils contradicting popes and councils, &c. So that, in fact, it would be very difficult to lay your finger on a single church, and say that it has erred more than the Church of Rome has. Couple this with the fact, that she is the *only* church which has ever made the claim, and the presumption against Infallibility will be very strong indeed.

But, my dear brethren, you may believe that the

Church of Rome is not infallible, and yet not be at all the better. If you have doubted the truth of the claim of infallibility, the observations and proofs I have brought forward, may have strengthened your disbelief in that doctrine; or, if you have had any doubts as to the propriety of our continuing in separation from the Church of Rome, these doubts may have been removed. But you may say our minds are fallible; we require an infallible guide. Well, you have one: you have got the word, the *written* word of the blessed God; there is *no* infallibility out of *it*. It is not in the Church of Rome; it is not in the Church of England; it is in the BIBLE, and in the BIBLE *alone*. I beseech you, then, my dear Roman Catholic brethren, to peruse that blessed book with an humble frame of mind, and a sound judgment; but above all, in a spirit of prayer, that you may be led to understand it, and to know a Saviour's love, that you may be made partakers in its glorious hopes, and frame your life and conduct according to its holy principles. Read your own authorised Bible: read the epistles of Peter and Paul, whom you claim as the founders of your church; compare them with the creed of Pope Pius IV., and you will soon perceive whether the Church of Rome has departed from the faith once delivered to the saints.—I have now, in conclusion, to thank my Roman Catholic brethren, who have so kindly borne with me during my lectures. I assure you—and I appeal to the searcher of hearts—that I wish you no evil. It was not to promote any sinister or unchristian object that I addressed you. If any words have escaped my lips which were calculated to cause uneasiness or pain to any one, I am heartily sorry for it. But I do earnestly entreat you to make

the salvation of your souls the first of all objects. O, rest not satisfied until you have thrown yourselves on the mercy of Jesus. He will receive you : He will comfort you : " search the Scriptures : " pray to your God : put your whole trust in the Saviour ; and, as surely as there is a Saviour, so surely He will be your Saviour, if you call upon Him in truth, and so surely shall you be brought to the knowledge of His SALVATION.

END OF PART FIRST.

PART SECOND.

VINDICIÆ LAICÆ.

"Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths."

PSALM cxviii. 105

"Search the Scriptures."—JOHN v. 39.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly."

COLOSSIANS iii 16

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VINDICIÆ LAICÆ.

1. WHETHER the sacred Scriptures should be withheld from any of the laity, or whether the diligent study of them should be urged on all, are questions that cannot long remain doubtful to the candid mind, that will calmly consider the subject, in the light of reason, of revelation, and of antiquity.

2. It will, I believe, be acknowledged by all who deserve the name of Christians, that the Bible contains a communication of the will of God to man, which the imperfections and evils of our fallen nature have rendered necessary, and which has been given to point out to us the way of salvation. Contemplating these facts in the light of reason, it is manifest, that the Bible is the gift of our *common Father*, for it has come from our *common God*. In Him we all equally live, move, and have our being. We are all equally the children of His family. Riches or poverty, rank or obscurity, knowledge or ignorance, clergy or laity, make no difference here. We all equally breathe His air; we are all equally enlightened, warmed, and cherished by His sun; and should we not all equally inhale the same vital spirit of truth, and be illuminated by the same cheering rays of heavenly wisdom, which He has set before us in His holy word? If, therefore, the Bible be the gift of our *common Father*, and if we all are equally His children, then have we all an equal, because a *common, right* to the volume of inspiration.

3. It is manifest, also, that the necessity for divine revelation has arisen from the *common* imperfections and evils of our fallen nature. What has been said of nature, is strictly true of nature's God; He does nothing in vain. He would not have given a revelation of His will, if that revelation were not necessary. If "the world by wisdom" could have known God, He would have left the world to acquire this knowledge by that wisdom. If, in respect of religion and morals, it was "in man that walketh, to direct his steps," He would have left him to that direction. If the comforts of earth could have administered to a mind afflicted, He would not have sent down from heaven, "everlasting consolation and good hope, through grace." A propensity to error, to evil, and to consequent misery, are the sad characteristics of human nature; and against these, man has not in himself an adequate remedy. But blessed be "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort," He has regarded us in our low estate, and has given to us His holy word, in which we can find a corrective for our errors and evils, and a rich support under suffering and sorrow. If, then, the necessity for divine revelation have arisen from our common imperfections and evils, have we not all a common right to that cure for them which has been provided by our *common Father*?

4. It is manifest, likewise, that the grand end at which revelation aims, is the salvation of the soul: and is not this a *common concern*? And is not this a *common salvation*? Is it not true of all, without exception, that they have sinned? Is it not true of all, without exception, that "the wages of sin is death"? And is not the gracious language of our heavenly Father the same

to all, without exception, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"? Here, then, we are also on *common ground*, a *common* criminality, a *common* exposure to eternal death, a *common* assurance of salvation through faith in our blessed Redeemer, and surely, of course, a *common right* to that heavenly book which testifies of this salvation.

5. On the whole, then, may it not be safely concluded, that, as the Bible is the gift of our common Father, as our need of it has arisen from our common imperfections and evils, and as the object it aims at, is our common salvation; we all have a common right to it, and it was designed by our God to be the common property of *all*?

6. I am aware of but one objection which can fairly be brought against this conclusion. It may be said, that, as man by transgression had forfeited all claim upon the justice of God, the subsequent grant of revelation was therefore an act of His mere mercy, and, of course, may be placed under whatever limitations or restrictions He shall think proper. This is undoubtedly true, and if it shall appear from the grant itself, that is, from the Bible, that any such restrictions have been enacted by the grantor, then our conclusion must be qualified by those restrictions; but if nothing of this nature shall be found in the Scriptures, as the infinite mercy of God would lead us to hope, then the conclusion stands unqualified, unrefuted, and, may I not add, irrefutable.

7. I shall now proceed to ascertain whether any such restrictions are to be found in the Bible; or, in other words, to consider the subject of enquiry in the light of revelation; and, in order to show my Roman Catholic readers that I do not intend to deceive them, by using

what they are taught to consider an erroneous translation, I shall make my quotations from their own version of the Scriptures.

8. On examining the pages of inspiration we learn that most invaluable benefits result from the study of the word of God, but we do not find any restrictions as to the persons who should seek after these benefits, and consequently, who should study the Bible, in order to attain them.

9. It is said in the first Psalm, verses 1st and 2nd, "Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence. But his will is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he shall meditate day and night." The positive part of this "blessed" man's character is, that he loves the law of God, and meditates therein day and night: should any one, then, be prevented from doing so, or should not all be encouraged to follow his example?

10. The 7th verse of the 11th Psalm (the 6th of the 12th in the Protestant version) assures us, that "the words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried by the fire, purged from the earth, refined seven times." The same idea is thus expressed in the 31st verse of the 17th Psalm, (the 18th in the Protestant version,) "The words of the Lord are fire-tried." This word occurs again in the 30th chapter of Proverbs, verse 5th, "Every word of God is fire-tried," which a note explains thus, '*is fire tried*, that is, most pure, like gold purified by fire.' Do not these passages declare that the word of God is the purest source of religious knowledge? Should any one then be denied access to it?

11. In the 18th Psalm (the 19th in the Hebrew, and in the Protestant version,) it is declared, verse 8 to verse 12, "The law of the Lord is unspotted, converting souls: the testimony of the Lord is faithful, giving wisdom to little ones. The justices of the Lord are right, rejoicing hearts: the commandment of the Lord is lightsome, enlightening the eyes. More to be desired than gold and many precious stones: and sweeter than honey and the honey-comb." Here God himself assures us, that His law *converts souls, gives wisdom even to little ones, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes, and is more desirable than gold, and sweeter than honey*; shall it be withheld then from any, even from little ones themselves?

12. In the 118th Psalm (the 119th in the Hebrew, and in the Protestant version,) we find the following passages. Verse 9th, "By what doth a young man correct his way? by observing his words." (Protestant version: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.") Shall we be told in the face of this declaration of God, that the Bible is not a proper book to be read by young people? Verse 11th, "Thy words have I hidden in my heart, that I may not sin against thee." Should this preservative against sin be withheld from any one? Verse 92nd, "Unless thy law had been my meditation, I had then, perhaps, perished in my abjection." Should any one be deprived of this comfort under affliction? Verse 99th, "I have understood more than all my teachers: because thy testimonies are my-meditation." Is the fear of even such a result as this, a good reason for withholding the Bible from any of the laity? Verse 105th, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path." Whether should we judge

him a friend or an enemy, who, in a dark night, and on a difficult road, should take the lamp out of the traveller's hand, and leave him to make his way as well as he could without it?

13. Instead of quoting any more passages from this Psalm, I shall beg the reader's attention to the following note on the 2nd verse of it in the Douay Bible. 'Note here, that in almost every verse of this Psalm, (which in number are 176,) the word and law of God, and the love and observance of it, are perpetually inculcated under a variety of denominations, all signifying the same thing.' It is here acknowledged, that, in this one Psalm, the word of God and the observance of it, are almost one hundred and seventy-six times inculcated; and yet, notwithstanding this acknowledgment, it is maintained by many members of the Church of Rome that the word of God should not be left open to all.

14. St. Paul, when exhorting the Ephesian Christians to put on the armour of God, that they might be fully prepared for their spiritual conflicts, uses the following words, "take unto you the helmet of salvation, and *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*" Eph. vi. 17. Is the word of God the sword with which the Holy Ghost has furnished the spiritual warrior, who then shall dare to disarm him? or can the person who attempts it be considered under any other character than an enemy, both to the Christian soldier, and to the King under whose banner he fights?

15. If, as the same apostle assures us, "the holy Scriptures can instruct to salvation, by the faith which is in Christ Jesus," should any be deprived of this instruction on so important a subject as salvation? If, as he adds

in the next verse, "All Scripture inspired of God is profitable, to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice," (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16,) must it not be a manifest act of injustice to withhold from any Christian that which is profitable to such invaluable purposes?

16. In short, if, as St. Peter tells us, 2 Ep. i. 19, the prophetic word is "As a light that shineth in a dark place," then, to withhold that light from any, is, with respect to them, to perpetuate the darkness, which the Almighty gave that light to dispel, and so far to counteract the gracious intention of God our Saviour, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 4.

17. It is almost unnecessary to add, that as the Scriptures spoken of in the preceding quotations are those of the Old Testament, this circumstance only strengthens the argument, as the New Testament is much more clear and complete than the Old, of which it was designed to be the explanation and perfection.

18. It thus appears, from the highest authority, that the sacred Scriptures are capable of producing the most salutary effects upon mankind; and it will be found on further investigation, that they are one of those means by which the Holy Spirit actually accomplishes the great business of salvation. In the judgment of St. John, the word of God is a means of producing faith, for he says: "These are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God: and that believing you may have life in his name." St. John xx. 31. Of this opinion also was St. Paul, who, at the close of his Epistle to the Romans, xvi. 26, says: "Which now is made manifest by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the precept of the eternal God, for the obedience of faith."

19. The sacred Scriptures were the means of convincing St. Paul of his sinfulness, for he says, "I did not know sin, but by the law : for I had not known concupiscence, if the law did not say : thou shalt not covet." Rom. vii. 7. And again, he asserts generally, iii. 20, "By the law is the knowledge of sin."

20. They are also productive of hope, as the same inspired writer declares ; "What things soever were written, were written for our learning : that through patience and the comfort of the scriptures, we might have hope." Rom. xv. 4. Now, if the Scriptures, through the blessing of God, can convince a man of his sinfulness, and consequent need of a Saviour—can produce in his soul, faith in the Lord Jesus, and fill him with comfort and hope ; would it tend to the advantage of true religion, to keep them out of the hands of any, or would it not be the greatest injustice to do so ?

21. Such, then, being the religious benefits to be derived from the Scriptures, which were written by the inspiration of God for our learning, it seems natural to conclude, that the more anxious persons are about their salvation, or the more truly religious they are, the more will they reverence and read the word of God, while those of a different temper will despise or neglect it. When we look to the Scriptures we find this to be the case. In the days of Jeremias, when the Jews had arrived at such a degree of irreligion and wickedness, that he was directed to denounce the destruction, which was afterwards brought on them by the Chaldeans, the prophet says, "Behold, the word of the Lord is become unto them a reproach : and they will not receive it." Jeremias vi. 10. And again, "The wise men are confounded, they are dismayed, and taken : for they have

cast away the word of the Lord, and there is no wisdom in them." Jer. viii. 9. When a part of the writings of this prophet was read before the wicked king, Joakim, we are told, "Now the king sat in the winter-house, in the ninth month : and there was a hearth before him, full of burning coals. And when Judi had read three or four pages, he cut it with the pen-knife, and he cast it into the fire that was upon the hearth, till all the volume was consumed with the fire that was on the hearth. And the king, and all his servants, that heard these words, were not afraid, nor did they rend their garments." *Jeremias xxxvi. 22—24.*

22. What a contrast to this was the conduct of the pious king, Josias, when Saphan, the scribe, read before him the book of the law, which Helcias, the high-priest, had found in the house of the Lord. "And when Saphan had read it before the king, and the king had heard the words of the law of the Lord, he rent his garments. And he commanded Helcias, the priest, and Ahicham, the son of Saphan, and Achobor the son of Micha, and Saphan, the scribe, and Asaia the king's servant, saying : Go and consult the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Juda, concerning the words of this book which is found : for the great wrath of the Lord is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened to the words of this book, to do all that is written for us." 4 Kings, (2 Kings in the Protestant version,) xxii. 10—13. Thus opposite was the conduct of these two kings, and equally opposite were their fates. To the first, God spoke by His prophet as follows : "Thus saith the Lord : Thou hast burned that volume—therefore, thus saith the Lord against Joachim the king of Juda : He shall have none to sit upon the

throne of David : And his dead body shall be cast out to the heat by day, and to the frost by night. And I will punish him, and his seed, and his servants, for their iniquities, and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Juda, all the evil that I have pronounced against them." Jer. xxxvi. 29—31. The answer of God to the messenger of the latter was, "To the king of Juda, who sent you to consult the Lord, thus shall you say : Forasmuch as thou hast heard the words of the book, and thy heart hath been moved to fear, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, hearing the words against this place, and the inhabitants thereof.....And thou hast rent thy garments, and wept before me, I also have heard thee, saith the Lord : Therefore I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy sepulchre in peace ; that thy eyes may not see all the evils which I will bring upon this place." 4 Kings xxii. 18—20.

23. Of similar import with the foregoing are the following passages. "To whom shall I have respect, but to him that is poor, and little, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my words ? Hear the word of the Lord, you that tremble at his word : your brethren that hate you, and cast you out for my name's sake, have said : Let the Lord be glorified, and we shall see in your joy : but they shall be confounded." Isaias lxvi. 2, 5. "Therefore," because they would not receive the word of the Lord, "I am full of the fury of the Lord, I am weary with holding in : pour it out upon the child abroad, and upon the council of the young men together : for man and woman shall be taken, the ancient, and he that is full of days." Jer. vi. 11. Surely, all should seriously

consider what Solomon has declared, Proverbs, xiii. 13, Protestant version, "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed, but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded."

24. It has now been proved from the word of God itself, that the most essential religious advantages are to be derived from the study of it; and as the gracious author of that word has laid no restrictions on the attainment of these advantages, I might rest my cause here, and conclude without fear of refutation, that all who can have access to the sacred Scriptures have a right to use them to their soul's health. But, as I wish, if possible, to put this point beyond fair dispute, I shall proceed to ascertain more directly, whether the practice of restricting the use of the word of God is countenanced either by the Old Testament or the New. Of this, on mature examination, I can see no trace in either, but the very reverse.

25. The Jews were taught to consider the revelation of God's will which was given to them, as a great and peculiar favour. "What other nation is there so renowned, that hath ceremonies, and just judgments, and all the law, which I will set forth this day before your eyes." Deut. iv. 8, and Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20. "Who declareth his word to Jacob: his justices and his judgments to Israel. He hath not done in like manner to every nation: and his judgments he hath not made manifest to them."

26. This revelation they were commanded to study themselves, and to teach it to their children. "Lay up these my words in your hearts and minds, and hang them for a sign on your hands, and place them between

your eyes. Teach your children that they meditate on them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest on the way, and when thou liest down and risest up. Thou shalt write them upon the posts and the doors of thy house." Deut. xi. 18—20. See also the same book, iv. 9, vi. 6—10. Not only was the private reading of the law thus urged on the Jews, but provision was made that it should be read publicly also. "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi and to all the ancients of Israel. And he commanded them, saying: After seven years, in the year of remission, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel come together, to appear in the sight of the Lord thy God, in the place which the Lord shall choose, thou shalt read the words of this law before all Israel, in their hearing. *And the people, being assembled together, both men and women, children and strangers, that are within thy gates: that hearing, they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and keep, and fulfil all the words of this law. That their children also, who are now ignorant, may hear, and fear the Lord their God, all the days that they live in the land whither ye are going over the Jordan to possess it.*" Deut. xxxi. 9—13.

27. In addition to these general directions for the private and public reading of the law, it was especially enjoined, that the king, particularly, should transcribe a copy of it for his own use: "But after he is raised to the throne of his kingdom, *he shall copy out to himself the Deuteronomy,*" (or, as the Protestant version translates it more intelligibly, "a copy,") "of this law in a volume, taking the copy of the priests of the Levitical tribe; and he shall have it with him, and shall read it

all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and keep his words and ceremonies that are commanded in the law." Deut. xvii. 18, 19. Nay, strange as such a measure may appear to "the wisdom of this world," when Joshua was commissioned by God to lead his people to the conquest of the promised land, a part of his instructions ran thus: "Let not the book of this law depart from thy mouth: but thou shalt meditate on it day and night, that thou mayst observe and do all things that are written in it: then shalt thou direct thy way, and understand it." Josue i. 8. The Jews were directed also to make use of their sacred Scriptures, as a rule whereby to judge of the pretensions of those who might claim to themselves the inspiration or authority of heaven, as the ground of what they did or taught. "And when they shall say to you: Seek of pythons and of diviners, who mutter in their enchantments: should not the people seek of their God, for the living of the dead? *To the law rather, and to the testimony. And if they speak not according to this word, they shall not have the morning light:*" or, as the Protestant translation says, "it is because there is no light in them." Isaias viii. 19, 20.

28. The last passage of the Old Testament which I shall submit to the reader's consideration, occurs in the eighth chapter of the book of Nehemiah, or, as it is called in the Douay Bible, "Second Esdras." It is as follows: "All the people were gathered together as one man, to the street which is before the water-gate, and they spoke to Esdras, the scribe, to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. Then Esdras, the priest, brought the law before the multitude

of men and women, and all those that could understand, in the first day of the seventh month. And he read it plainly in the street that was before the water-gate, from the morning until mid-day, before the men and the women, and all those that could understand : and the ears of the people were attentive to the book.....And Nehemias, and Esdras, the priest and scribe, and the Levite, who interpreted to all the people, said : This is a holy day to the Lord our God : do not mourn nor weep. For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.....And on the second day, the chiefs of the families of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, were gathered together to Esdras, the scribe, that he should interpret to them the words of the law..... And he read in the book of the law of God, day by day, from the first day till the last, and they kept the solemnity seven days." It is requisite to observe here, that, as the Jews, by their long residence in Babylon, had generally lost the use of their own language, and acquired that of their conquerors, it was necessary that the law should be *interpreted* to them ; that is, translated from the Hebrew into the Chaldee, that they might hear it in the tongue with which they were most acquainted. Any further remark on this passage is unnecessary ; it speaks for itself, that all who can understand, should be made acquainted with the word of God, and that in the language which they know best.

29. It appears then, that the Old Testament gives no encouragement to withholding the Scriptures from any one. I shall now appeal to the New. And for the sake of brevity, will confine my enquiries principally to the writings of the apostles of the circumcision and of the

uncircumcision, and to the declarations of our blessed Lord. We shall thus ascertain what was taught on this subject to the Jews by St. Peter, and to the Gentiles by St. Paul, and what is left on record for both, in the teaching of our Saviour, as recorded in the four Gospels. Let us ask, then, did St. Peter ever think of such a thing as the Scriptures being withheld from any, or does he countenance the practice? To both questions I answer, no; and can prove it, I think, satisfactorily. It is clear that St. Peter had no idea of the Scriptures being withheld from any, for in his preaching he continually appeals to them, and supposes his auditory to be acquainted with them. He did just what a Protestant clergyman would do now on addressing a Protestant congregation; he appealed to the Scriptures as a book with which his auditors were, or ought to be, acquainted, but from the use of which none were interdicted. For proof of this, I refer the reader to the following passages in the Acts of the Apostles, i. 15—20; ii. 14—36; iii. 18—25; iv. 8—11, 25, 26. He does the same likewise in his writings. See 1 Peter i. 16, 24, 25; ii. 6, 7, 10, 22; iii. 10—12; 2 Peter i. 17. From the manner also in which he speaks in his Epistles, it is clear he designed his writings to be read by all. He addresses his first Epistle "To the strangers dispersed through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." Did he then intend that his Epistle should be read by them? And if he did, what becomes of the restrictions on reading the Scriptures? Were all these strangers clergy, and none of them laity? Were all of them learned, and none of them ignorant? His second Epistle he addresses, if possible, more generally—"To them that have

obtained equal faith with us," that is, to *all* believers into whose hands it might come. But I must request more particular attention to the sentiments contained in his second Epistle, i. 12, 13: "I will begin to put you *always in remembrance of these things*: though indeed you know them, and are confirmed in the present truth. But I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, *to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance.*" And, verse 15: "I will do my endeavour, that after my decease also, you may often have, *whereby you may keep a memory of these things.*" To the same purpose he writes in the beginning of the third chapter; "Behold this second Epistle I write to you, my dearly beloved, in which I stir up, by way of admonition, your sincere mind: *That you may be mindful of those words which I told you before from the holy prophets, and of your apostles, of the precepts of the Lord and Saviour.*" Surely, the person who wrote this could never contemplate for a moment, that the writings of the prophets and apostles, or the precepts of the Lord and Saviour, should be kept back from any, when they were so manifestly intended for the instruction of all.

30. Having adduced the sentiments of St. Peter on the subject of our enquiry, let us now proceed to ascertain those of St. Paul. He, like St. Peter, in his preaching continually appeals to the Scriptures, and quotes them as open to the perusal of all. So St. Luke informs us, Acts xvii. 1, 2: "And when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. *And Paul, according to his custom, went in unto them; and for three Sabbath-days he reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.*"

I cannot here pass without notice an observation made in reference to this subject by the sacred historian in the same chapter, when contrasting the conduct of the Bereans with that of the Thessalonians, he says, verse 11: “*Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the word with all eagerness, daily searching the Scriptures, whether these things were so.*” In the estimation of the inspired writer of the Acts, it was noble conduct in the Bereans to search the Scriptures daily, to ascertain whether what even St. Paul taught them was agreeable to the word of God. Now, if it were right for St. Paul, when teaching Christianity, to reason out of the Scriptures, surely it cannot be wrong for the Roman Catholic or any other clergy to do the same; and if it were right for the Berean laity to search the Scriptures daily whether what they were taught were true, surely it cannot be wrong for the Roman Catholic or any other laity to follow their example. The note on this verse in the Rhemish Testament, though by no means strong enough on the subject, I shall quote, with the earnest wish, that those for whom it was written, would seriously consider and act upon it. ‘The Jews of Berea are justly commended for their eagerly embracing the truth, and searching the Scriptures, to find out the texts alleged by the Apostles; which was a far more generous proceeding than that of their countrymen at Thessalonica, who persecuted the preachers of the Gospel, without examining the grounds they alleged for what they taught.’

31. But to return to the practice of St. Paul with reference to the Scriptures; many instances of it will be found in the Acts of the Apostles, for which I refer

the reader to the following passages : xiii. 17—41, 47 ; xxiii. 5 ; xxvi. 22, 23 ; xxviii. 23, 25—27. Before I leave this part of the subject, I would observe, that it was not the custom of St. Peter and St. Paul only, to reason from the Scriptures, to quote them, and appeal to them, as books known and open to all ; it was the constant practice of the primitive preachers of the Gospel. It was thus St. Stephen, the first martyr, preached : Acts, vii. 2—53 : thus Philip, Acts, viii. 30—35 : thus Apollos, “ For with much vigour he convinced the Jews openly, *showing by the Scriptures* that Jesus is the Christ,” Acts, xviii. 28. It well deserves remark, that when the qualifications of Apollos are mentioned by the inspired historian, verse 24, one particular noticed is, that he was “ *mighty in the Scriptures.*” St. Luke considered it as a peculiar excellence in a preacher of the Gospel, “ that he was mighty in the Scriptures.” Is such the judgment of all in the present day, or would not a preacher be thought much more of by many if he were “ mighty in ” tradition, in councils, in the fathers, in the schoolmen, in short, in anything rather than the Scriptures ? And if there be so much difference on this matter between the judgment of St. Luke and the judgment of these persons, must not there be something wrong somewhere ?

32. Not only in preaching did St. Paul refer to the Scriptures, but in his writings also he quotes them in the same manner as he did in his discourses. This apostle has written so great a part of the New Testament, and his quotations from the Old are so many, that I shall not attempt to refer to them. My Protestant readers can easily find them out, if they are conversant

with the Old Testament, and if not, they will be pointed out to them by the marginal references in our larger Bibles; and though my Roman Catholic readers may miss many of the apostle's allusions and indirect references to the Old Testament, yet they will at once see the direct references on looking into their own translation, as in that they are printed in Italics. On these quotations I have only to remark, that they are clearly made by a writer who had no idea whatever that the book from which he quoted, was kept back from the perusal of any one to whom he wrote.

33. There are fourteen letters, or epistles, of St. Paul in the New Testament: of these, four were written to individuals, and the rest to Christian communities. On the former I shall at present make no remark, but confine my observations to the latter. If St. Paul believed that the Scriptures were the property of the church, meaning thereby the clergy, and that the laity were not to read them without the permission of the clergy, nor to understand them, except in the sense which the church puts upon them, he would, of course, have addressed his epistles, not to the laity, but to the clergy of the different communities to which he wrote, leaving it to the clergy to communicate to the laity as much of these letters as they thought right, and to such only as they thought proper, and to teach them how to understand what was thus communicated to them. The apostle, however, has pursued a totally different plan, and therefore we may safely conclude, he was of a totally different opinion. He addresses his First Epistle to the Corinthians, i. 2, "To the church of God that is at Corinth," and who they were that constituted that

church, he immediately tells us; "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," that is, to all the holy brethren, not only clergy but laity; and lest this should not be general enough, he adds, *with all that invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in every place of theirs and ours,*" that is, manifestly, to all Christians every where. And, in the name of common sense, would he address a letter to *all Christians every where*, if he did not think that all Christians every where, who could get it, should read it? The address of the Second Epistle runs in a similar strain: "To the church of God that is at Corinth, with *all* the saints that are in *all* Achaia." 2 Cor. i. 1. The address of the Epistle to the Galatians, i. 2, is to "the churches of Galatia;" that is, to all the Christian congregations in the province of Galatia. The Epistle to the Ephesians is addressed "to *all* the saints who are at Ephesus, and to *the faithful* in Christ Jesus." i. 1. The address of the Epistle to the Philippians demands particular attention; it is, "To *all* the saints in Christ Jesus, who are at Philippi, *with the bishops and deacons.*" i. 1. This is the first of St. Paul's letters in which he mentions the clergy particularly; and let it be remembered that he mentions them *last, not first*. What right, then, have the clergy of any church, in respect of the Scriptures, to put themselves not only first, but also to claim authority over the word of God, and to make the laity, or any part of the laity dependant on them, not merely for permission to read the Bible, but for a sense to put on it? His Epistle to the Colossians, he addresses "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ Jesus, who are at Colossa." i. 2: the First to the Thessalonians, "To the church of the Thes-

salomians," i. 1; and the Second in the same manner, i. 1.

34. There is no address prefixed to the Epistle to the Hebrews, but it is clear from the conclusion of it, that the apostle wrote it for the use of the *laity*, rather than the *clergy*, of the church to which it was sent. The clergy are mentioned but three times in the whole Epistle, and then they are not addressed, but the laity are addressed with reference to them. Thus, xiii. 7. "Remember your prelates who have spoken the word of God to you;" v. 17. "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls;" and v. 24, "Salute all your prelates." The word, "prelates," used in these places of the Rhemish Testament, does not now give us the correct sense of the apostle, as by the word prelates we understand bishops, whereas it is manifest from the text that he meant the clergy at large. The Latin Vulgate, from which the Rhemish version was translated, expresses the apostle's meaning much better by the word *præpositi*, which is used in these texts, and signifies those who are "set over" others, and with which corresponds the Protestant rendering, "they that have the rule over you." Here, then, is a long Epistle written for the laity; and could the apostle be of the opinion that it should not be read by all for whose use he wrote it? The view which has been now given respecting the persons to whom the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, is that of the best critics, and is as old at least as the fifth century, when one of the fathers, Theodoret, in his commentary on v. 24, said: "This way of speaking intimates, that their rulers did not need such instruction ;

for which reason he did not write to them, but to their disciples."

35. With the Epistle to the Romans, which I have kept for the last, I shall conclude the present argument. The address runs thus: "*To all that are at Rome*, the beloved of God, called to be saints." Two remarks manifestly offer themselves on reading this passage. The one is, that of all existing churches, that of Rome is least defensible in keeping back the Scriptures from any of her members, for when this portion of the Scriptures was particularly sent to the Church of Rome, it was addressed *to all that were there*. The other observation is, that surely *all* the members of the Church of Rome have a right to read, at least the Epistle to the Romans, for God, through his inspired apostle, addressed that Epistle to *all* the members of that church. It need scarcely be added, that if they have a right to read this Epistle, it will be difficult to point out any other portion of holy writ which they have not a right to read also.

36. It is manifest, then, from St. Paul's Epistles, that he wrote them for the express purpose, that *all* to whom they were addressed should become acquainted with them; but I can go further, and show that he expected this to be done, nay, even commanded it. In his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, iii. 14, 15, he says: "*If any man* obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not esteem him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." It is plain from this passage, that St. Paul expected all the Christians at Thessalonica to be so well acquainted with his Epistle to

them, that if *any man* did not obey it, it must be, not from ignorance, but from a principle of disobedience, on account of which he directs the other Christians to admonish him, and to take such measures as would make him ashamed of his conduct. In his Epistle to the Colossians, iv. 16, he gives the following directions : “ When this Epistle shall have been read with you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that you read that which is of the Laodiceans.” Here, we have St. Paul commanding, that even epistles, not directly written to particular churches, should be read in these churches, as well as those immediately addressed to themselves. But the strongest passage of all, occurs in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, v. 27. “ *I charge you by the Lord, that this Epistle be read to all the holy brethren.*” The reader will at once perceive, that any remarks of mine, on this most solemn injunction, are unnecessary.

37. Before I pass on from the argument for the unrestricted reading of the sacred Scriptures, thus furnished by the writings of St. Peter and St. Paul, I would just observe, that the reasoning applied to them is equally applicable to the Epistle of St. James, the First of St. John, and that of Jude, as they were manifestly written for general reading. In the Protestant Bible they are called “ General Epistles,” and in the Roman Catholic version the first and the last are denominated “ Catholic,” the reason of which is thus assigned in a note on the Title of St. James’ Epistle; ‘ This EPISTLE is called *catholic*, or *universal* . . . because, it is, not written to any peculiar people, or particular person, but to the faithful in general.’ Surely, then, the “ faithful in general” have a right to read it. It is also worthy of notice, that though the

Epistles of St. Paul to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, and the Second and Third of St. John, were addressed to individuals, yet, the primitive Christians, knowing them to be written "by the inspiration of God," regarded them as their common property, and inserted them into the canon of the New Testament for the use of all. Such likewise is the case with the Gospel of St. Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles, which, though addressed to an individual, were designed for general reading, for which purpose also, the other three gospels were manifestly intended.

38. It remains now to examine, whether the practice of our blessed Lord, and the sentiments which He expressed, countenance or discountenance the unrestricted reading of the holy Scriptures. And here I shall commence with stating, that our blessed Lord constantly referred to and quoted the Scriptures, as what ought to be known, and were known by the people whom he addressed. Here again, for the sake of brevity, I shall only refer to, and request the reader to examine either in the Protestant or Roman Catholic New Testament, the following texts : Mat. xi. 10 ; xii. 3, 5, 7 ; xiii. 14, 15 ; xix. 4, 5 ; xxi. 13, 16, 42 ; xxii. 31, 32, 43, 44 ; xxvi. 24, 31. Mark xi. 17 ; xii. 10. Luke x. 26, 27 ; xxii. 37 ; xxiv. 25, 26, 27, 44, 46. John v. 39, 45, 46 ; vi. 45 ; vii. 38 ; x. 34, 35 ; xiii. 18 ; xv. 25 ; xvii, 12.

39. These passages show very clearly what was the practice of our blessed Lord, and appear to be decisive on the subject under consideration ; for if it be wrong that the people should read the Scriptures, and be taught to refer to them as the highest religious authority, then decidedly the conduct of our Lord was wrong, for He acted upon this principle ; but if His practice were right,

which I conceive no Christian will deny, then decidedly the practice of laying restrictions on reading the Scriptures is wrong, for it is directly opposed to His.

40. We have, however, more direct evidence of the sentiments of our blessed Lord on the subject under consideration. In the seventh chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, at the fifth and subsequent verses, there is the following most important conversation between our Lord and some of the Jewish teachers: "And the Pharisees and scribes asked him: Why do not thy disciples walk according to the tradition of the ancients, but they eat bread with common (that is, unwashed) hands? But he answering, said to them: Well did Isaias prophecy of you hypocrites, as it is written: *This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain do they worship me, teaching doctrines and precepts of men.* For leaving the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, the washings of pots and of cups: and many other things you do like to these. And He said to them: Well do you make void the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition. *For Moses said: Honour thy Father and thy Mother; and, He that shall curse Father or Mother, dying, let him die.* But you say: If a man shall say to his father or mother, Corban, (which is a gift,) whatsoever is from me, shall profit thee: And farther, you suffer him not to do anything for his father and mother, Making void the word of God by your own tradition which you have given forth." It appears from this passage, that the Scribes and Pharisees had set up, besides the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, another standard of religion, *the tradition of the ancients*, and this our Lord most expressly condemns, because it led

men to *leave the commandment of God*, nay more, even to *make void the commandment of God*, that *they might keep their own traditions*. It will be for the reader to judge, how far this conversation of our Lord with the Jewish teachers, presents a case in point at the present day, and how far it goes to prove that it is not only the right, but the duty of all, to derive their religious knowledge and practice from that pure and unerring source, the word of God.

41. In the 12th chapter of the same Gospel, there is recorded an attempt of the Sadducees to confound our Lord on the subject of the resurrection of the dead, which they did not believe. His reply to them demands peculiar attention: "Jesus answering, saith to them: "Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God?" verse 24. He here assigns two reasons for the errors of the Sadducees; and the *first and leading one is their ignorance of the Scriptures*, "*Do ye not therefore err, because you know not the Scriptures?*" It appears, then, that in the judgment of our blessed Lord, ignorance of the Scriptures is a source of error. Would He not, therefore, have all to be acquainted with the word of God?

42. In the 16th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, there is related our Lord's parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, in which the rich sinner, when in torments, entreats Abraham that he would send Lazarus to admonish his brethren, lest they should come into the same place of punishment. The following is the answer to his request: "And Abraham said to him: *They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them,*" verse 29. And when he urged his request a second time, stating

the powerful impression that must be made on them if one went to them from the dead; he answered again, verse 31: "*If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe if one should rise again from the dead.*" If our Lord believed as the restrictors of Bible reading do, He surely would never have put into Abraham's mouth the answer he gave to the rich man. He would have made him say, they have the church, let them hear her; they have their clergy, let them hear them; or anything else rather than the Law and the Prophets. Be it remembered, however, that on the all-important subject of escaping the torments of hell, *he recommends that which so many in the present day forbid, to hear the Scriptures; to search them;* and when adverting a second time to the same subject, He only strengthens what He had said before, by the solemn assurance, that if the Scriptures do not produce faith in us, neither would we believe, though one should rise again from the dead. This is decisive on the point, if Christ our Saviour is to be credited.

43. With two or three remarks on the Apocalypse of St. John, the Apostle, I shall conclude this part of the subject. In the 1st chapter, St. John describes how he saw our blessed Lord in vision, and mentions the following command which he had received from Him:—"What thou seest, write in a book: and send to the seven churches which are in Asia, to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamus, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea," verse 11. But were these things to be written that they might not be read, or were they to be sent to the clergy of the churches to be read by them only? Let that be deter-

mined by the following words, repeated no less than seven times in the 2d and 3d chapters, being in the conclusion of each address to each church: "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.*" They were designed to be the common property, and to engage the common attention, of all who belonged to the churches.

44. One observation more, and I have done. It is acknowledged both by Roman Catholics and Protestants, I believe, without a dissenting voice, that the Apocalypse of St. John is the most obscure and difficult part of the sacred Scriptures; yet the inspired writer of that book, at the very beginning of it, holds out a strong encouragement to all, to make themselves acquainted with it: and however the advocates of keeping the people in ignorance of the Scriptures may sneer at the idea of the unlearned layman studying the Revelation of St. John, the apostle himself does not hesitate to say, verse 3: "*Blessed is he that readeth and heareth the words of this prophecy.*" Away then with *that pretext* which has been made use of to keep millions of our fellow countrymen ignorant of the word of God, that it is obscure and difficult to be understood; since the inspiration of the Almighty expressly says, with respect to the most obscure and difficult part of it, "*Blessed is he that readeth and heareth the words of this prophecy.*"

45. I shall now proceed to consider the subject in the light of antiquity, and shall endeavour to ascertain the opinions and practices respecting the word of God, which obtained in the primitive church.

46. Next in point of time to the writings of the New Testament, are the Epistles of the Apostolic Fathers,

which abound so much in Scripture quotations and Scriptural allusions, as to show clearly that all in the different churches to which they were written, were in the habit of reading the word of God. The earliest of these is the Epistle to the Church of Corinth, written at the close of the first century, by St. Clement, Bishop of Rome. In this are the following passages: "Take the Epistle of the blessed Paul, the apostle, into your hands," &c. "Ye know, beloved, ye *know full well* the holy Scriptures; and have *thoroughly searched* into the oracles of God. Call them therefore to your remembrance." St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who was martyred about the year 107, writes thus to the church of the Philadelphians: "Fleeing to the Gospel as to the flesh of Christ, and to the Apostles as to the presbytery of the church; let us also love the Prophets, for as much as they also have led us to the Gospel, and to hope in Christ, and to expect Him." And Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who suffered martyrdom in the year 147, in his letter to the Philippians, says, speaking of St. Paul: "Who, being himself in person with those who then lived, did, with all exactness and soundness, teach the word of truth, and being gone from you, wrote an epistle to you, into which if you look, you will be able to edify yourselves in the faith that has been delivered unto you." And again: "For I trust that you are *well exercised* in the holy Scriptures, and that nothing is hid from you." See Wake's Genuine Epistles of the Apostolic Fathers.

47. St. Justin the Martyr, who suffered death about the year 165, in his First Apology for the Christians, says: "Upon the day called Sunday, all that live either in city or country, meet together at the same place,

where the *writings of the Apostles and Prophets are read*, as much as time will give leave; when the Reader has done, the Bishop makes a sermon, wherein he instructs the people, and animates them to the practice of such lovely virtues." Reeves' Apologies, vol. 1, p. 123.

48. The same writer also says: "We are ordered by Christ not to obey human doctrines, but those things which are declared by the prophets." "We are to give credit only to God and his institutes, not to human traditions; we must fly to the Scriptures, that in all things we may be safe." In Tryp. apud Laurent. Catholicum Consensum, p. 16.

49. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, A.D. 170: "Consult the sacred writings, for these can with greater evidence instruct you how you can escape eternal punishment, and attain to those lasting benefits which God promises to his worshippers." Ad. Autol. L. 1, Apud Usserii Historiam Dogmaticam, p. 11.

50. St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, who suffered martyrdom about the year 202, speaks thus: "We know that the Scriptures are perfect, for they are dictated by the word of God and his Spirit." Adver. Hæres, lib. 2, c. 47. "When heretics are refuted by the Scriptures, they are turned to charge the Scriptures themselves, as if they were not of authority, and because the truth could not be found from them by those who were ignorant of tradition." Ib. L. 3, c. 2. "By the apostles the Gospel came to us, which they then preached, but which afterwards, by the will of God, they delivered to us in the Scriptures, *to be in future the foundation and pillar of our faith.*" Ib. L. 3, c. 1. Apud Laurent. Cath. Con. p. 3.

51. St. Clement of Alexandria, who died about the year 220: "They indeed are holy letters which make men holy." *Ad Gentes*. "We say nothing without the Scriptures." *Strom. L. 6*. "They are impious, and act impiously, because they do not believe the Scriptures." *Strom. L. 5*. "They only are the faithful, who receive the Scriptures." *Strom. L. 7*. "Other learning indeed is useful, but the reading of the Scriptures is necessary." *Strom. L. 6*, *Apud Laurent. Cath. Con. p. 18*, et *Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 13*.

52. See more in Dupin's account of the life and writings of this father, particularly in his analysis of the seventh book of his *Stromata*, where, among other things in reply to the objections brought against Christianity from the multitude of religious sects, he asserts: "*That there is an infallible rule to distinguish truth from falsehood; and that this rule is the holy Scriptures.*" *Ecc. Hist. vol. 1, p. 80*.

53. Tertullian, in his *Apology for the Christians*, says: "We meet together also for the reading of the Scriptures, and we take such lessons out of them as we judge to suit best with the circumstances of the time, to confirm our faith, either by forewarning us what we are to expect, or by bringing to our minds the predictions already fulfilled, *and certainly our spiritual life is wonderfully nourished by reading the holy Scriptures, our hopes thereby are erected, and our trust fixed and settled upon God.*" *Chap. 39*. "But this, in short, is my prescription against those adulterers of the faith, to try all their doctrines by the Gospel, that rule of truth, which came from Christ, and was transmitted by his apostles: that, I say, is the touchstone by which all the different

opinions of succeeding teachers is to be proved." Chap. 47, Reeves' Apologies, vol. 1. "Take from the heretics that knowledge which they have in common with the heathens, and let them establish their questions by Scripture alone, and they cannot stand." De Præscrip. "Heretics fly from the light of Scripture." De Resur. Carnis. apud. Laurent. Cath. Con. p. 14.

54. Hippolitus, who suffered martyrdom in the reign of the Emperor Alexander: "There is one God, my brethren, whom we do not otherwise acknowledge but from the sacred Scriptures. For if any one wish to profess the wisdom of this world, he can attain to this only by reading the doctrines of the Philosophers, so, whosoever of us would exercise piety towards God, can learn it nowhere else but from the divine Scriptures. Whatever things therefore the holy Scriptures declare let us know; whatever they teach let us understand." Adver. Hæres. apud Uss. Answer to a Challenge, &c., p. 37.

55. Origen of Alexandria, who died about the year 252, was the son of Leonidas, who suffered martyrdom in the persecution of Severus. Of this celebrated Father, Eusebius informs us, that even from his childhood, "he had got no small stock of knowledge in the doctrine of the faith, continuing *whilst he was yet a child, to exercise himself in searching the holy Scriptures*, about which he was not a little laborious." His father, he says, "always persuaded him to exercise himself in the study of holy things, rather than in the learning of the Greeks, enjoining it on him as a daily task, to learn something by heart out of the Scriptures and repeat it. Nor was the child unwilling or slack in the performance, but most cheerfully laboured in these things; so that simple

and common reading of the sacred Scriptures could not satisfy him, but he would search after something more, and even from that time enquired into the more profound meanings thereof, insomuch that he troubled his father by asking him, what was the true meaning of such a sentence of Scripture inspired by God. He seemingly before his face reproved him, admonishing him not to search into anything above the capacity of his years, nor to enquire any further than the plain meaning of Scripture; but he privately with himself rejoiced exceedingly, and gave the greatest thanks to God, the author of all good, that he had vouchsafed to make him the father of such a child." *Ecc. His. Lib. 6. c. 2.*

56. This father, thus educated, says: "We beseech you, not to content yourselves to hear the word of God *when read in the church*, but to apply yourselves to it *at home*, and to meditate upon it day and night; for Jesus Christ is there and everywhere present to those that seek him. Therefore he has commanded us to meditate on the law of the Lord, when we walk by the way, and when we sit in our houses, when we lie down, and when we rise up." *Hom. 9, in Levit. apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 14.* "In which (the Old and New Testament) every word which appertains to God may be sought and discussed, and all knowledge of things may from them be acquired. But if anything remain which the divine Scripture has not determined, no other third Scripture should be received to authorise knowledge, but that which remains we must commit to the fire; that is, we must reserve it to God. For in the present world, God would not have us to know all things." *Hom. 5, in Levit. apud Uss. Answer to a Chal. p. 37.*

57. St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, crowned with martyrdom, A.D. 258, says: "Christ only is to be followed, therefore we should obey and do that which Christ did and ordered to be done, since he says in his gospel, John xv., 'If ye do what I command you, I no longer call you servants, but friends.' And that Christ only is to be heard, the Father himself testifies from heaven, saying, Matt. xvii., 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him.' Wherefore, if Christ only is to be heard, we are not to attend to that which some one before us has thought should be done, but to that which he who is before us all, Christ, has first done. For we should not follow the custom of man, but the truth of God, since God speaks by the Prophet Jeremiah, and says, chap. xxix., 'In vain do they worship me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men;' and our Lord repeats it again in the gospel, saying: 'Ye reject the commandment of God, that you may establish your tradition.' Moreover he lays it down, and says in another place, Matt. v: 'He who shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.' Now, if it is not permitted to break the least of our Lord's commandments, how much more must it be unlawful to infringe upon commandments so great, so important, so connected with the sacrament of our Lord's passion and our redemption? Or, by human tradition, to change it into a different thing from what it was divinely instituted." Ep. 63, ad Cœcil. And again: "Let nothing be innovated, but what is delivered: Whence is that tradition? Whether descending from the Lord's, or the evangelical authority, or coming from the commandments and

epistles of the apostles? For that those things are to be done which are written, God testifies and propounds to Joshua, the son of Nun, saying: 'The book of this law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate in it day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein.' If therefore it is commanded in the Gospel or the Epistles, and Acts of the Apostles,—then let this divine and holy tradition be observed." And a little further on, in the same letter, he observes: "What obstinacy is this? what presumption, to prefer human tradition to divine appointment, and not to perceive that God is displeased and angry, as often as human tradition breaks or passes over the divine precepts?" Ep. 74, ad Pompeian.

58. Lactantius, who wrote his *Institutions* about the year 320, says: "The heavenly doctrine is the only wisdom. The precepts of God are both simple and true, they change man, and renovate him." Lib. 3. c. 16. "Human precepts have no might, which want the greater authority, that is, the divine." c. 27. "The sacred Scriptures, instruct us in the knowledge of truth."—Lib. 7. c. 14, apud Laurent. Cath. Con. p. 18.

59. Constantine the Great, in his speech at the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, says: "The evangelical and apostolic books, and the oracles of the ancient prophets, clearly teach us what is to be thought concerning divine things. Laying aside, therefore, the love of contention, let us take from the inspired oracles the solution of controversies." Theodoret, lib. 1. c. 7.

60. Eusebius, consecrated Bishop of Cæsarea, about A.D. 314, speaking of some ancient heretics, says: "They have impudently adulterated the sacred Scriptures, they

have rejected the canon of the primitive faith, and have been ignorant of Christ. They are not inquisitive after that which the holy Scriptures say, but bestow much labour and industry in finding out such a scheme of syllogism as may confirm the system of their impiety. And if any one propose to them a text of the divine Scriptures, they examine whether a copulative or disjunctive form of a syllogism may be made of it. Leaving the holy Scriptures of God, they study geometry; being of the earth, they speak of things earthly, and are ignorant of Him that cometh from above. Therefore, among some of them, Euclid's Geometry is with great diligence studied. Aristotle and Theophrastus are admired, and in like manner Galen is by others of them even adored. Hence it is, they have impudently laid their hands upon the divine Scriptures, saying, they ought to be corrected." Ecclesiastical His. lib. 5. c. 28.

61. St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria: "The holy Scriptures, given by inspiration of God, are of themselves sufficient for the declaration of truth." *Contra. Idol.* "The canonical books are the anchor and stay of our faith." *In Synopsi.* "Learn only from the sacred writings, the doctrines you find in them are sufficient." *Ad Serap.* "If you are disciples of the Gospels, proceed by the Scriptures; but if you wish to talk of things different from the Scriptures, why do you contend with us who cannot bear to speak or hear what is foreign to them; as our Lord has said, 'If you continue in my word, ye shall be my disciples,' what then is the madness of your assurance, to speak things which are not written?" *De Incar. Chris. apud Laurent. p. 3.*

62. St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem: "We ought not

to teach any thing concerning divine mysteries, but what we can confirm by the testimonies of Scriptures. *Do not believe what I say, if I do not prove it by the holy Scriptures.*" Apud Dupin. Eccles. His. vol. 1. p. 220.

63. St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers: "When our discourse is concerning the things of God, let us concede to God the knowledge of himself, and let us attend to his words with pious veneration." De Trinit. Lib. 1. "The word of God which was poured into our ears by the teaching of the Evangelist, was sufficient for believers; for what is there of the salvation of man which is not contained in it? What is there left out or obscure? All are full and perfect." Lib. 2. "Heresy is not from the Scripture, but from the exposition of it." Ib. "No one should doubt, that for the knowledge of divine things, we must make use of divine instruction." Ib. Lib. 4, apud Laurent. p. 18.

64. St. Optatus, Bishop of Milevi, in Numidia, in his work against the Donatists, writes thus: "You say *it is lawful*, we say *it is not lawful*, the minds of the people are doubtful and wavering between your *it is lawful*, and our *it is not lawful*. Let no one believe either you or us; we all are contentious men. We must seek therefore for judges between us. If Christians are to be judges, both sides cannot afford such. We must seek for a judge from without. If he be a *Pagan*, he cannot know the secrets of Christianity; if he be a *Jew*, he is an enemy to Christian baptism. Therefore, no judgment of this matter can be found on earth; we must seek for a judge from heaven. But why do we solicit heaven, when we have here in the Gospel a last will. Because here earthly things can be compared with

heavenly ; it is like as if a man had many sons ; while he is present with them, he commands each of them, a last will is not yet necessary. So likewise Christ, while he was present on the earth (though neither is he wanting now) for a time commanded the apostles whatever was necessary. But just as an earthly father, when he feels himself on the borders of death, fearing lest after his decease, the brothers on a disagreement should quarrel ; calls in witnesses, and transfers his will from his dying breast to tablets that shall last ; so that if any contention shall spring up among the brothers, they do not go to his tomb, but consult his will, and when he rests in his grave he speaks to them from those silent tablets as if he were alive. He whose testament we have is in heaven, therefore let his pleasure be sought in the gospel as in his last will." Lib. 5, ad princip. apud Chillingworth, vol. 2, p. 385.

65. St. Ephrem, the Syrian, Deacon of Edessa: "Take care that you neglect not your soul, but devote yourself to reading and prayers, that your mind may be enlightened, and 'that you may become perfect and entire, wanting nothing.' Let others boast of their intimacy and conversation with great men, with princes and kings, but do you glory before the angels of God, in having conversation with the Spirit of God through the holy Scriptures, for it is the Holy Spirit that speaks through them. Be diligent therefore to make the reading of the divine Scriptures familiar to you, and to continue in prayer. But if you *cannot read*, get some one through whom you may hear and profit." Apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 24.

66. St. Basil the Great, Bishop of Cesarea : "Believe

the things which are written, the things which are not written do not seek." Hom. 29. "It is a manifest falling from faith, and a proof of arrogance, either to set aside any of the things which are written, or to introduce any of the things which are not written." De Fide Vera. "If whatever is not of faith is sin, as the apostle says; and faith is by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; then whatever is without the inspired Scriptures, not being of faith is sin." In Eth. Reg. 80. apud Uss. Answer to a Challenge, p. 38.

67. "It is right and necessary that every one should learn from the divine writings those things which belong to use, both for the filling of the mind with piety, and that he should not be accustomed to human traditions." Reg. Brev. 95. "The things which appear to be spoken doubtfully and obscurely in some places of holy Scripture, are explained by those which in other places are clear and perspicuous." In Ascet. apud Laurent, p. 4.

68. St. Gregory of Nazianzen: "I am among the first of those that praise their wisdom, who apply themselves to the sacred writings, or wish to do so, and therefore would prefer nothing to this employment." In Orat. de Mod. Disp. "Be occupied continually in the divine oracles." De Ver. Scrip. Lib. apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 32.

69. St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa: "In that only let the truth be acknowledged, on which is the seal of Scripture testimony." De Anima & Resur. apud Usher's Answer to a Challenge, p. 38.

70. St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan: "He who is exercised in the words of the apostles of Christ, knows the commandments of God." In Psalm 118, Ser. 2.

"Seek Christ in the divine Scriptures, there Christ is found." Exhort. ad Virgines. "When the sacred Scriptures do not speak, who shall speak?" De vocat. Gen. Lib. 2. "I do not wish, sacred Emperor, that you should believe my disputation. Let us ask the Scriptures; let us ask the apostles and prophets; let us ask Christ." Lib. 1. De Fide, ad Gratian, apud Laurent, p. 7.

71. St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis: "All things are clear in the sacred Scripture to those who wish to approach the divine word with pious consideration." In Hær. 76. "All things are clear and lucid in the divine Scripture." In Hær. 69. "The Valentinians and Gnostics used unwritten traditions, to which they accommodated the Scripture, making ropes of sand." In Hær. 30. "In the sacred Scripture all things are wonderfully written for our salvation, and plain." In Hær. 69, apud Laurent, p. 17.

72. St. Jerome: "This, because it has not authority from the Scriptures, is despised with the same easiness as it is proved." In Mat. 23: "Those things which they make and find, as it were by apostolical tradition, without the authority and testimonies of Scripture, the sword (i.e. the word) of God smites." In Hagg. c. 1: "All that we speak, we should confirm from the holy Scriptures." In Psal. 98: "They therefore err, because they know not the Scriptures; and because they know not the Scriptures, they consequently know not the power of God, that is, Christ, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God." In Mat. 22: "He who knows not the Scriptures, knows not the power and wisdom of God. *Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.*"

In Præm. Isa: "The Scripture is read by all people, that all may understand; as the apostles wrote, and our Lord himself through the Gospels spoke, not that a few should understand, but all." In Psal. 86: "As we do not deny the things which are written, so we reject the things which are not written." Adver. Helvid: "Love the holy Scriptures, and wisdom will love you." Ad Demet. apud Laurent, p. 7.

73. St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople: "For this reason, we often acquaint you many days beforehand with the subject of our discourse, that taking the Bible unto your hands in the mean time, and running over the whole passage, you may have your minds better prepared to hear what is to be spoken: and this is the thing I have always advised, and shall still continue to exhort you to, that you should not only hear what is said in this place, but spend your time at home continually in reading the holy Scriptures. And here, let no one use those frigid and vain excuses, I am a man engaged in the business of the law, I am taken up with civil affairs, I am a tradesman, I have a wife and children to bring up, I have the care of a family, I am a secular man, it belongs not to me to read the Scriptures, but to those who have bid adieu to the world, and are retired into the mountains, and have nothing else to do but to exercise themselves in such a way of living. What sayest thou, O man! Is it not thy business to read the Scriptures, because thou art distracted with a multitude of other cares? Yes, certainly, it belongs to thee more than to them. For they have not so much need of the help of the holy Scriptures, as you have who are tossed in the waves of the multiplicity of business."

74. "But some again will say, what if we cannot understand the things which are contained therein? Why, even in that case, though you do not understand every thing that is contained therein, yet by reading you shall obtain much satisfaction, for it is impossible that you should be equally ignorant of all things in those books. For the grace of the Spirit so ordered it, that they should originally be composed and written by publicans, and fishers, and tent-makers, and shepherds, and private and illiterate men, that none of the most ignorant and unlearned might have this excuse of difficulty to fly to; that the things there spoken might be easy to be looked into by all men; that the handicraftsman, the servant, the widow, the most illiterate and unlearned among men, might reap benefit and advantage from hearing them read. The apostles and prophets wrote, not like the philosophers of the Gentiles, in obscure terms, but made things plain to the understandings of all men, as being the common teachers of the world, that every man by himself might learn by reading alone the things that were spoken. To whom are not all things in the Gospel manifest and plain? Who is there, who hearing those sayings, 'Blessed are the meek, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the pure in heart,' and the like, would desire a teacher to understand the meaning of them? Moreover, the signs and the miracles, and histories, are they not all intelligible and plain to any ordinary reader? This, therefore, is only a pretence and excuse, and cloak for idleness. Thou dost not understand the things contained in the Scriptures; how shouldest thou understand them, when thou wilt not so much as look into them? Take the book into thy hands, read the whole history,

and remember those things which are intelligible and easy; and those things that are more obscure and dark, read over and over again: and if thou canst not by frequent reading dive into the meaning of what is said; go to a wise person, betake thyself to a teacher, and confer with him about any such passage. Show thy diligence and desire to be informed, and when God sees thy willingness and readiness of mind, He will not despise thy vigilance and care; but though man inform thee not in the things about which thou makest enquiry, He himself will certainly reveal it unto thee."

75. "Remember the Eunuch of the Ethiopian Queen, who, though he was a barbarian, and immersed in a multitude of cares and business, and understood not what he read; yet he read for all that, sitting in his chariot. And if he showed so great diligence by the way, consider how he behaved himself at home; if he would not omit reading in the time of a journey, much less would he omit it when he sat quietly in his own house? If, when he understood nothing of it, he still continued to read, how much more would he do it, when he came to understand it? Wherefore, because he read when he had no guide, he quickly found a guide; God knew the willingness of his mind, and accepted his diligence, and presently sent him a teacher. But, you will say, Philip does not now stand by us; no, but the Spirit that moved Philip is still by us. Let us not neglect our own salvation, beloved. These things were written for our salvation, upon whom the ends of the world are come. The reading of the Scriptures is our great defence against sin; our ignorance of them is a dangerous precipice, and a deep gulph; it is an absolute betraying

of our salvation, to know nothing of the divine law. *It is this that has brought forth so many heresies, this that has brought so much corruption into our lives ; this that has turned all things into confusion.*" Hom. 8, in Lazar. apud Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, Lib. 13, c. 4, sec. 8.

76. St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo : " In those things which are plainly laid down in Scripture, all that relates to faith or practice is found." De Doct. Christ. Lib. 2. " If any one, concerning Christ or his Church, or concerning any other thing which belongs to faith or our life ; I will not say if any, if we, but if an angel from heaven shall preach to you besides what ye have received in the Scriptures of the law and the Gospel, let him be accursed." Cont. Petil. Lib. 3. " Let us not hear, I say thus, or you say thus, but thus saith the Lord. Surely these are the books of our Lord, to the authority of which we both submit, which we both believe ; there let us seek for the Church, there let us discuss our cause. Let there be set aside what we have brought against each other, not from the divine canonical Scriptures, but from other sources. I do not wish that the holy Church of God should be demonstrated from human documents, but from the divine oracles. Let us search for her in the holy canonical Scriptures." De Unit. Eccles. c. 3. " Read these things to us from the Law, from the Prophets, the Psalms, from the Gospel itself, or from the Epistles of the Apostles, and we will believe." Ib. c. 6. " Whether they (i.e. the Donatists) hold the Church, let them not show, but from the canonical books of the sacred Scriptures. For neither do we say, that therefore they should believe that we are

in the Church of Christ, because Optatus or Ambrose has recommended the church which we hold, or because it is acknowledged by the councils of our colleagues, or because so many wonderful things are done in it. It is not therefore manifested to be Catholic, because these things are done in it. The Lord Jesus himself has judged, that his disciples should rather be confirmed by the testimonies of the Law and the Prophets. These are the documents of our cause, these the foundations, these the confirmations." *Ib.* c. 16. "Neither ought I allege the Nicene Council, nor you that of Ariminum, for neither am I bound by the authority of the one, nor you by that of the other ; but on the authorities of the Scriptures, our common witnesses, let subject contend with subject, cause with cause, reason with reason." *Cont. Max. Lib.* 3, c. 14, apud Laurent, p. 9.

77. St. Isidore, of Pelusium, or Damietta, in Egypt : Dupin gives the following account of his letters on the Scriptures : " The greatest and best part of St. Isidore's letters are upon several texts of holy Scripture. There is hardly a book as well of the Old as of the New Testament, of which he doth not explain several texts. He often recommends the reading of the holy Scripture, and gives excellent rules for the good use and true understanding of it. He requires that every one who attempts to read it, should prepare himself, by purifying his heart, and purging it from passions and vice. *L.* 4. 133. That in reading it all along he should not only endeavour to comprehend the sense, but labour earnestly to believe and practise what it teacheth. *L.* 4. 43. He adds, that we must read it with a great deal of reverence, and not seek to dive into the incom-

prehensible mysteries. L. 1. 24. That God hath, with much reason, ordered that there should be in holy Scripture, some things very plain, and other places very obscure, as a mark of His wisdom and providence; for if all of it were clear, what would man have to stir up his attention, and if all of it were obscure, how would it be possible to understand it? That which is evident explains that which is obscure; and although some places may still remain obscure, yet there is one great advantage to be drawn from them, which is, to debase man's pride. L. 4. 82. He also observes in several places, that the holy Scripture is written in such a style as is to be preferred before all other authors; for, saith he, the affected eloquence of heathen writers serves only to gratify their vanity, and contributes nothing to instruction; but the style of the Scripture is plain and natural, *and very proper to instruct and inform the ignorant in the greatest truths.*" L. 4, 61, 79, 140. Ecc. Hist. vol. 1, p. 421.

78. Euthenius, Bishop of Tyana, says: "Would you have me neglect the study of the holy Scriptures? Where then will you have knowledge necessary to support your faith? It is dangerous for this life to be ignorant of the Roman laws, and it is no less dangerous for another life to be ignorant of the oracles of our heavenly King. The Scripture is the nourishment of the soul; suffer not then the inward man to die with hunger, by depriving him of the word of God. There are too many who inflict mortal wounds upon the soul; suffer them to seek medicines for their maladies and griefs.....In sum, they will discourage others from reading and studying the holy Scripture, under a pre-

tence that they ought not to dive into things too profound; do it, because they are afraid that they should be convinced of their errors by it. So, when they find themselves pressed by convincing testimonies of holy Scripture, they give a sense clear contrary to the words, and if they find but one word which can be brought to their opinion, although it be nothing to the sense of the place, they must use it as an invincible demonstration."

79. I am aware it may be said, that as Eutherius was a Nestorian, and of course a heretic, I should not have brought forward his sentiments. In reply to this, I beg to remark, that exclusive of the excellency of these principles, in which there is certainly no Nestorianism, two reasons induced me to quote him. The one is, that the book in which they are contained, passed in the Christian world as a treatise of St. Athanasius, and was published as such among his works, and of course as Athanasius was no heretic, there can be nothing heretical in sentiments which were thus ascribed to him. And the second is, that I might lay before my Roman Catholic readers, the remark which that learned and candid member of their own church, Dupin, makes on the passage just now quoted: "*We must own*," he says, "*that these principles are not ill*, although men may offend in the application they make of them." Ecc. Hist. vol. 1, p. 445.

80. St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria: "The divine Scripture is sufficient to make them, who are educated in it, wise and most approved, and possessed of most sufficient understanding." Lib. 7. Cont. Jul. "How can we receive and account among the things which are true, that which the divine Scripture has not spoken?"

Glaph. in Gen. Lib. 2, apud Usher's Answer to a Challenge, p. 89.

81. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus : " Do not bring me human reasons and arguments, I am persuaded only by the divine Scripture." Dial. 1. " I am not so bold as to affirm any thing on which the divine Scripture is silent." Dial. 2, apud Uss. Answer, &c. p. 40.

82. St. Prosper, *a layman*. The sentiments of this Father are so strikingly expressed by himself in Latin verse, that I hope it will justify the insertion of them in the original.

" In sacris quanquam libris, quos nosse laboras,
 Plurima sunt, Lector, clausa et opaca tibi ;
 Invigilare tamen studio ne desine sacro,
 Exercent animum dona morata tuum,
 Gravior est fructus, quem spes productior edit ;
 Ultro objectorum vilius est pretium,
 Oblectant adoperta etiam mysteria mentem,
 Qui dedit ut quæras ; addet ut invenias."

83. That is : " Although in the sacred books, which you labour to know, there are many things, O reader, obscure and dark to you ; yet leave not off the sacred study ; but persist in it. Gifts delayed exercise the mind ; that fruit is more grateful which a protracted hope gives ; the value of things which readily offer themselves is but small. Even hidden mysteries delight the mind. May he that has granted to you to seek, add, that you shall find." Apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 89.

84. St. Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspa : " The nature of this error, our Lord and Saviour himself shows us, when censuring the Sadducees, He says, ' ye err, not knowing

the Scriptures, nor the power of God.'” Ad Thrasi-mundem, Lib. 1. “Never cease from the divine oracles; and indulge the whole delight of your heart in the sacred Scriptures.” Ad Gallam. “There (in the Scriptures) is what suits every age, what is expedient for every profession.” De Confess. apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 90.

85. St. Leo I., Pope of Rome : “They fall into folly, who, when they are prevented from knowing the truth, by any thing obscure, do not recur to the prophetic words, the apostolic letters, or the evangelical authorities, but to themselves. And therefore they become teachers of error, because they were not disciples of truth.” Ep. ad Flavian. apud Laurent, p. 23.

86. Cæsarius, Bishop of Arles : “Though the person who is ignorant of reading cannot read the divine lessons, yet he can willingly hear one who reads; and he who knows how to read it, can never happen that he shall not find books in which to read the sacred Scriptures. When the nights grow long, who is there that can sleep so much, as not for even three hours to employ himself in divine reading, or in hearing others read. *If they who cannot read, hire for themselves those who can, that they may acquire earthly wealth, why do not you, whoever you are, that cannot read, hire one who shall read over to you the divine Scriptures, that from them you may obtain eternal rewards.* I entreat and admonish you, therefore, brethren, that those of you who can read, do frequently read over the divine Scriptures, and that those who cannot, do attentively listen when others read; for, as our body perishes if it take not food, so does our soul die if it receive not the divine word.” Hom. 20. apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 90.

87. St. Patrick : Jocelin in his life of this father, says : " He applied his mind to the study of letters, but chiefly to psalms, to hymns, and spiritual songs ; and retaining them in his memory, and continually singing them to the Lord ; so that even from *the flower of his youth* he was daily accustomed to sing devoutly to God *the whole Psalter.*" Chap. 12. It is natural that such a person should say what is ascribed to him in the book De Abus. Sæc. c. 5 : " That the soul is strengthened by continual meditation on the sacred Scriptures." Apud Usher's Religion of the Ancient Irish, p. 4.

88. Sedulius : " Search the law in which his (i.e. God's) will is contained." In Eph. 5. " He wishes to be too wise, who seeks after those things which our Lord does not mention." In Rom. 12, apud Uss. Rel. of Ancient Irish, p. 2.

89. Claudius : " They therefore err, because they know not the Scriptures, *and because they are ignorant of the Scriptures, they consequently know not Christ, who is the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*" In Mat. Lib. 8, apud Uss. Religion of Ancient Irish, p. 2.

90. Pope Gregory the Great : " The holy Scriptures, as a kind of looking-glass, is set before the eyes of our mind, that our inward face may be seen by it. By it we know what in us is foul, and what is fair ; by it we perceive how much we profit, by it how far we are from profiting. It declares the brave exploits of the saints, and excites the weak to the imitation of them ; and while it commemorates their victorious acts, it confirms and strengthens our weakness against the assaults of vice, and we are the less fearful in the encounter, by seeing the foregoing triumphs of so many valiant men. But

sometimes it sets before us not only their virtues but their falls; that, in the victory of the strong, we may find that which we ought to imitate, and again in their falls that which we ought to fear." *Expos. Moral.* in 1. cap. Job. "Study most, dear brethren, the words of God. Do not despise the letters which our Creator hath sent us. It is a great advantage that by them the soul is quickened, lest it should be benumbed with the cold of its iniquity. When we there see that just men have done valiantly, we ourselves are disposed to courage in well-doing. The soul of the tender is kindled by the flame of holy examples. It sees their noble acts, and is displeased with itself that it does not imitate them." *Hom.* 15, in *Ezek. in Tracts against Popery*, vol. 1, Tit.

• 5, chap. 3.

91. St. Columba, or Columbkil: If we are to judge of him by his followers, he was an advocate for the sacred Scriptures as the great rule of faith and practice: for, as Bede informs us: "They observed only those works of piety and chastity, which they could learn in the prophetic, evangelical, and apostolical writings." *Hist. Ecc. Lib.* 3, c. 4, in *Uss. Rel. of Ancient Irish*, p. 2.

92. St. Isidore, Bishop of Seville: "The holy Scripture, to the weak, and those that are children in understanding, as to its history, seems low in words; when to excellent men it rises higher, while it opens to them its mysteries; and by this means it remains common both to the little ones and to the perfect. The holy Scripture is varied in proportion to the understanding of every reader." *De Sum. Bono. Lib.* 1, cap. 18. "He who wishes to be always with God, should pray often and read often. For when we pray, we speak to God, and

when we read, God speaks to us. Every advantage proceeds from reading and meditation; for what we know not, we learn by reading, and what we have learned, we preserve by meditation. The reading of the sacred Scriptures confers a double benefit, it instructs the mind, and, having drawn man off from the vanities of the world, it leads to the love of God." Lib. 3, c. 8, apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 94.

93. Of Aidan, Bishop of the Northumbrians, Bede informs us: "That he was so far from the sloth of the age, that all who went with him, *whether clergy or laymen*, were obliged to meditate, that is, to apply themselves to read the Scriptures, or to learn the Psalms." Hist. Ecc. Lib. 3, c. 5, apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 101.

94. Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz, in his letter to one of his friends, Nithardus, exhorts him "to contemn temporal things, and to apply himself to the study of holy Scripture, that he may acquire that divine wisdom, which is more glittering than gold, finer than silver, more sparkling than diamonds, more rare than precious stones; adding, that there is nothing he can search after in his youth, with greater honour, or possess with greater comfort and pleasure in his age, than the knowledge of holy Scripture." Apud Dupin. Ecc. Hist. vol. 2, p. 31.

95. The Venerable Bede: "Christ sent the sacred Scriptures into all the world, in which He preaches the faith of His name, and the hope of salvation, to all who belong to His kingdom." In Ezram. Lib. 1, c. 1: "*If any one does not feed on the word of God, he is dead.*" In Luc. c. 4: "As we cannot perfectly be free from vain thoughts, as far as we can, we should drive them away by the introduction of good thoughts, and espe-

cially by frequent meditation on the Scriptures, according to the example of the Psalmist, who says: 'How do I love thy law, O Lord, it is my meditation all the day.'" (Ps. 119, v. 97.) In Hom. Alest. apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 106.

96. St. John Damascene: "All inspired Scripture is eminently useful. Wherefore, it is the best thing, and most useful to the soul, to search the divine Scriptures. For, as a tree planted by a stream of water, so, a soul irrigated by the Scriptures, is strengthened, and produces the mature fruit of an orthodox faith, and is always adorned with green leaves, that is, with actions pleasing to God." Orthodox Fid. Lib. 4, c. 18, apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 107.

97. Alcuin, an Englishman, of whom Dupin states: "Charlemagne looked upon him as his master, and he had the reputation of being one of the most learned men of his age, in ecclesiastical matters." Ecc. Hist. vol. 2, p. 46. He says: "The reading of the holy Scriptures is the knowledge of divine happiness. Constant reading purifies the soul." De Virt. apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 109.

98. Haymo, a pupil of Alcuin, and afterwards Bishop of Halberstadt, in Saxony: "As animals are refreshed in the pastures, so are the souls of the faithful enriched by the divine Scriptures." In Psal. 22. "By frequent meditation of the Scriptures, vain thoughts are driven away." In Ps. 150. apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 114.

99. Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mentz: "That divine wisdom which shines forth in the holy Scripture, is both to the strong and the weak, both to the wise and the foolish, if they will mind it and truly obey

it, a wholesome medicine. It is the enlightening of the mind, the correction of life, the path of righteousness; and therefore the greater and the less want its help, and stand in need of its conduct." *Apud Tracts against Popery*, vol. 1, Tit. 5, c. 3.

100. Smaragdus, Abbot of St. Michael in Lorraine: "The knowledge of sacred reading is a staff to the weak, furnishes arms to the strong, powerfully overcomes the crafty wiles of the enemy, and promises eternal crowns to the conquerors." In *Prefat. Evan.* "Our understanding is renewed by the exercises of wisdom, by the meditation of the word of God, by the knowledge of His law. And by how much any one profits daily by the reading of the Scripture—by how much higher his mind soars—by so much is he ever and daily renovated." In *Ep. ad Rom. apud Uss. Hist. Dogm.* p. 126.

101. Berno, the Abbot: "Among the various events which are accustomed to befall human weakness, I consider the meditation of the holy Scriptures as a special and most powerful consolation, which the apostle's authority also seems to testify, when it says: 'Whatsoever things are written, are written for our learning,' &c. This is that table richly covered with the heavenly repast, which confers rest on the weary, health on the infirm, recovery to the fallen, and fortitude to those that are standing fast in the faith." *Ep. ad Eberhard, apud Uss. Hist. Dogm.* p. 130.

102. Theophylact, Archbishop of Aris, in Bulgaria: "If thou wouldest have thy children obey thee, instruct them in the divine word. Say not that it belongs only to monks to read the Scriptures; for it is the duty of every Christian, especially of those who are conversant

in the world, who stand in need of greater assistance, as men tossed in a storm. It is for thy own interest, that thy children be well versed in the Scriptures, there they will learn to reverence their parents." In Ephes. c. 6, apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 132.

103. Rupert, Abbot of Duyts: "The holy Scripture is rightly called a field, because it is really a public thing, a thing laid open, and proposed to all men, yea, and to all nations who desire to hear or to read it." Lib. 1, De Glorif. Trinitat. "We say rightly, that ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ, for without the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, it is impossible that the mind of man can stand, so as not to be carried about by every wind of doctrine." In Joan. c. 5, apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 140.

104. St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux: "Dearest sister, if you wish to be always with God, always pray and always read. Divine reading is very necessary for us. For by reading we learn what we should do, what we should guard against, whither we should go. Whence it is said, 'Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and light to my paths.' Reading instructs us for an active and contemplative life, therefore it is said in the Psalms, 'Blessed is the man, who will meditate day and night in the law of the Lord.' Reading and prayer are the arms by which the devil is defeated: they are the instruments by which eternal bliss is obtained. By prayer and reading vices are destroyed, and virtues are nourished in the soul.....Therefore, my beloved sister in Christ, continue frequent in prayer, persevere in meditation on the Scriptures, be assiduous in the law of God.....Reading takes away error of life, it withdraws from the vanity

of the world.....Venerable sister, may God open your heart in his law and in his precepts." Sermo. 50, apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 143.

105. Peter of Blois: "There is one king, and his law is true, it is an undefiled law converting souls, and gives wisdom to little ones. It conforms itself to little ones, to the great, and to the middling; it condescends to the necessities of the poor, to the anxieties of the oppressed, to the distresses of the sad, to the faults of the offending.....This law instructs and informs unto life." In Job. c. 2, apud Uss. Hist. Dogm, p. 144.

106. Pope Gregory the IX: "*Since, according to the testimony of truth, ignorance of the Scriptures is the occasion of error; it is expedient that all should read or hear them.*" Ep. 6, ad Germanum, Patriar. Constantinop. apud Wharton's Auctarium, p. 416.

107. The reader has now seen what was thought of the sacred Scriptures, and the use which should be made of them, by more than fifty of the most eminent and influential men who appeared in the Christian world, from the first century to the early part of the thirteenth, beginning with Pope Clement the 1st., and ending with Pope Gregory the 9th.—Having thus ascertained the principles which prevailed in the Christian Church in reference to the word of God, it only remains to notice the practice to which these principles gave rise.

108. It was the practice of the primitive church to translate the Scriptures into the languages of the different nations, thereby laying them open to the perusal of all who understood these languages. So early as the second century, the New Testament was translated into the Syriac and Latin tongues. There is a most impor-

tant remark of St. Augustine's respecting the translations into the Latin language. "The number of those who have translated the Scriptures from the Hebrew into the Greek, may be computed ; but the number of those who have translated the Greek into the Latin cannot. *For immediately upon the first introduction of Christianity, if a person got possession of a Greek manuscript, and thought he had any knowledge of the two languages, he attempted to translate the Scriptures.*" De Doct. Christ. Lib. 2, c. 11, apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 211. It would seem from this passage, that those Christians of our days, who have called down upon themselves the heavy censure of the present Pope Leo,* for translating the Scriptures into all the languages they can, are only following the steps of their brethren, who lived at "the first introduction of Christianity," and who, it appears, had no more conception than they have, that the word of God should be withheld from any.

109. Eusebius, speaking of Christ and his apostles, says: "As for His promise to them, that He would make them 'Fishers of men,' He not only uttered it in words, but performed it actually and abundantly, and conferred on them so great a degree of strength and power, that they composed writings and published books; and the authority of all those books was so great, that, being translated into all languages, as well of Greeks as Barbarians, throughout the whole world, they are studiously read by all nations, and the contents of them are believed to be divine oracles." De Laud. Constan. c. 17.

110. Theodoret, who was consecrated Bishop of Cyrus,

* A.D. 1827.

about the year 420, says : "The Hebrew books are not only translated into the language of the Greeks, but also that of the Romans, the Indians, Persians, Armenians, Scythians, Sarmatians, Egyptians, and, in short, into all the languages which all nations use at this day." De Curand. Græc. Ser. 5, apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 58. St. Chrysostom speaks to the same effect in his second Homily on St. John.

111. It was the practice of the primitive church to read the Scriptures publicly, at the time of divine service. Of this we have had evidence already from Justin Martyr, and to this several canons of ancient councils refer. The Council of Antioch, A.D. 341, declared : "That any person coming into the church, and only staying to *hear the Scriptures*, but not uniting in the prayers, nor partaking of the eucharist, should be excommunicated." Apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 193.

112. The following canons of the Council of Laodicea, A.D. 497, bear on the same subject. The sixteenth : "That the Gospel should be read, together with the other books of Scripture, on Saturday." It was customary then to have public worship on Saturday as well as on Sunday, and this was an enactment that the Scriptures should be read in the service of that day as well as on Sunday. The seventeenth : "That many Psalms should not be sung together, but a Lesson between every Psalm." The fifty-ninth : "That private psalms ought not to be used in the churches, nor any books read there which were not canonical, but only the canonical books of the Old and New Testament." Dupin, vol. 1, p. 613.

113. The eighty-fourth canon of the fourth Council of Carthage, held A.D. 398, declares : "That the bishop

shall not hinder any one to enter the church and hear the word of God, whether he be a heretic, a heathen, or a Jew, until the Mass of the Catechumens." See Uss. & Dupin, vol. 1, p. 624. The first canon of the Council of Valentia, in Spain, A.D. 524, ordains: "That before the oblations are brought out, and the Catechumens dismissed, the Gospel shall be read after the lessons of the Apostles, that the Catechumens and Penitents may understand the wholesome precepts of Jesus Christ." Dupin, vol. 1, p. 691.

114. To these scripture lessons, which were frequently the subject of the sermon in the primitive church, we find many references in ancient writers. We have seen this already in the case of St. Chrysostom. I shall only mention one instance more, from a discourse of St. Leo, the first of that name that was Pope of Rome. "The evangelical lesson, beloved, which has opened to us the sacred history of our Lord's passion, is so known to the universal church from being frequently heard, that every one of you may recollect the order of events, as if it was laid before your eyes." *De Pass. Dom. Ser. 13*, apud Uss. *Hist. Dogm.* p. 87.

115. In consequence of this practice, there was, in the primitive church, a particular order of the clergy, called Readers, who were set apart for the express purpose of reading the Scriptures at public worship. This, though one of the minor orders, was nevertheless considered as very honorable. St. Cyprian speaks of ordaining to this office two eminent confessors, Aurelius and Celerinus. *Ep. 24 & 33*. In some editions, 38, 39. And Socrates informs us, that the Emperor Julian, the Apostate, during his hypocritical profession of Chris-

tianity, was made a Reader in the church of Nicomedia. Ecc. Hist. Lib. 8, c. 1.

116. The same order existed in the English church in the year 957, as appears from Elfric's canons; one of which says: "The Lector (i. e. Reader) is to read in God's church, and is ordained to publish God's word." Johnson's Ecclesiastical Laws, vol. 1. And in the twelfth century, the celebrated Master of the Sentences, Peter Lombard, Archbishop of Paris, gives the following directions to Readers: "He who is advanced to this rank, should be instructed in the knowledge of letters, that he may understand the meaning of words, may know the force of accents, and read distinctly, lest by a confused pronunciation he should prevent the hearers from understanding. The voice of the Reader should consult the ears and the heart." Sent. Lib. 4, Distinc. 24, apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 144.

117. In some churches, where the people who attended, spoke different languages, there was also another officer, whose business was to turn from one language into another the sermon which was preached, and the Scriptures which were read, so that all might understand them. In reference to this, we are told of the Martyr Procopius, that he held three offices in the Church of Scythopolis, namely, Reader, Exorcist, and *Interpreter of the Syrian language*. See Valesius' notes on Euseb. Ecc. Hist. Lib. 8. c. 1.

118. It was the custom of the primitive Christians, not only to read the Scriptures in their public worship, but also to have copies of them in the church, for the use of those who chose at any time to peruse them. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, in the fifth century, had the

following lines written on the wall of the apartment in his church where the copies of the Scripture lay for perusal :

“Si quem sancta tenet meditandi in lege voluntas ;
Hic poterit residens sacris intendere libris.” .

Ep. ad Severam.

119. That is : “If any one have a pious desire of meditating in the Law, here he may sit down and apply to the sacred books.” Apud Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 232. It appears to have been with reference to the practice of reading the Scriptures in the church, that Constantine the Great addressed the following letter to Eusebius :—

VICTOR CONSTANTINUS MAXIMUS AUGUSTUS,

120. To EUSEBIUS.—In that City which bears our name, (i. e. Constantinople) by the assistance of God our Saviour's Providence, a vast multitude of men have joined themselves to the most holy church. Whereas therefore all things do there receive a very great increase, it seems highly requisite that there should be more churches erected in that city. Wherefore, do you most willingly receive that which I have determined to do. For it seemed fit to signify to your prudence, that you should order *fifty copies* of the divine Scriptures (*the provision and use whereof, you know to be chiefly necessary for the instruction of the church,*) to be written on well prepared parchment, by artificial transcribers of books, most skilful in the art of accurate and fair writing: which copies must be very legible, and easily portable, in order to their being used. Moreover, letters are dispatched from our Clemency to the Rationalist of the diocesis, that he should take care for the providing

of all things necessary in order to the finishing of the said copies. This, therefore, shall be the work of your diligence, to see that the written copies be forthwith provided. You are also empowered by the authority of this our letter, to have the use of two public carriages, in order to their conveyance. For by this means, those which are transcribed fair, may most commodiously be conveyed even to our sight; to wit, one of the deacons of your church being employed in the performance hereof; who, when he comes to us, shall be made sensible of our bounty. God preserve you, dear brother." Euseb. Vita. Constan. L. 4, c. 36.

121. It is much to the credit of Constantine, that while he took such care to supply the churches with copies of the Scriptures, he was not himself inattentive to the sacred volume. "He constituted," says Eusebius, "a church of God, as it were, within the Imperial Palace; and with diligence and cheerfulness led the way himself to those who assembled within that church. Moreover, he took the Bible into his hands, and with an attentive mind meditated upon those divinely inspired oracles." Vita. Constan. L. 4, c. 17. Thus, he acted up to the spirit of what was ordained in the Council of Nice, which he assembled: "*That no Christian should be without the Scriptures.*" Apud. Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 193.

122. The primitive Christians read the Scriptures, not only in public, but in private also. I shall only notice here the evidence which was given of this in the Dioclesian persecution. In this period of rage against the church, Christians were required, on pain of death, to give up their Bibles to be burned. Some, through

fear complied, but multitudes both of men and women resisted, even to death. "Felix of Tiburia, in Africa, being asked to deliver up the Scriptures, answered, 'I have them, but will not part with them.' He was condemned to be beheaded. In Sicily, Eupilus, a Martyr, being asked, 'Why do you keep the Scriptures, forbidden by the Emperors?' answered, 'because I am a Christian. Life eternal is in them; and he that gives them up, loses life eternal.' He suffered also in the same cause." Milner's *History of the Church of Christ*, vol. 2, p. 18. Such, too, was the constancy of the female martyrs, Agape, and Irene. When the grand Inquisitor asked Irene, 'who advised you to keep these parchments and Scriptures to the present time?' She answered, "God Almighty, who has commanded us to love him even unto death; for which cause we dare not betray him, but prefer to be burned alive, or suffer any other things which may happen to us, rather than deliver up such writings." Baronius, in Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticæ*. L. 13, c. 4, sec. 8.

123. It well deserves to be noticed here, that those, who in this persecution, gave up their Bibles to be burned, were by the primitive Christians denominated "traditores," or traitors; and considered as suitable subjects of ecclesiastical censure. The thirteenth canon of the Council of Arles, held in the year 314, decrees: "That such clergymen as have been convicted of this offence should be degraded from their office." Dupin's *Ecc. Hist.* vol. 1, p. 596.

124. The primitive Christians were diligent in teaching their children the sacred Scriptures, even from an early age. We have seen this already in the case of

Leonidas, the father of Origen, and similar instances abound in ecclesiastical writers. Socrates, when speaking of Eusebius Emisenus, says: "He was descended from noble personages of Edessa in Mesopotamia, *and from his childhood he learned the sacred Scriptures.*" Valesius's note on this passage of Socrates, is well worth attention. He says: "Sozomen, in his third book, explains this passage of Socrates; when he speaks thus, concerning Eusebius Emisenus, 'from his childhood (*according to the custom of his own country*) he learned the sacred Scriptures by heart.' *'Therefore the boys of Edessa got by heart the books of sacred Scripture, according to the usage of their ancestors.'* Indeed, 'Ecclesiastical writers do attest, *that the Edessans were most ardent lovers of the Christian religion.*'" See Val. not. on Socrates' Ecc. Hist. L. 2, c. 9. It is manifest, then, that this learned member of the Gallican Church, did not consider the putting of the Scriptures into the hands of children as an indignity to the sacred books, but as a proof that they who did so, were "most ardent lovers of the Christian religion." St. Jerome's seventh letter is addressed to Læta, the wife of Toxotius, in which, among other directions for the education of her daughter Paula, he recommends that she should be taught the Scriptures. Dupin, after making several quotations from this letter, says: "To these moral precepts, St. Jerome adds an instruction for the studies of young girls, and advises them to read *all the canonical books, both of the Old and New Testament, not excepting the Canticles.*" Ecc. Hist. vol. 1, p. 344. Similar sentiments occur in his twelfth letter to Gaudentius, respecting the education of his daughter Pacatula.

125. Not only were the children of the primitive Christians thus taught the Scriptures at home, but public schools were also established for the same purpose. "The Christians," says Mosheim, "applied themselves with much care to instruct their children in religion, and to render the study of the sacred Scriptures familiar to them; and for this purpose schools were erected even from the commencement of Christianity." *Ecc. Hist. Century 1st, part 2, chap. 3, sec. 7.* We hear much of these schools in Christian antiquity. "When Gregory, the Apostle of the Armenians, first converted that nation, it is said in his life, that he set up schools in every city, and masters over them, by the king's command, to teach the Armenian children to read the Bible. And Theodoret relates a remarkable story of Protogenes, the scribe, that when Valens, the Arian Emperor, banished him to Antinoe, in Thebais, in the utmost parts Egypt, finding the greatest part of the city to be heathens, he set up a charity school among them, and taught them the holy Scriptures; dictating to them, in writing, David's Psalms, and making them learn such doctrines of the apostolic writings as were proper for them to understand; by which means he brought many, both of the children and parents, over to the Christian faith. By the canons of some councils, such sort of charity schools were appointed to be set up in cathedrals and other churches, where, no doubt, according to the custom of those days, children were taught to read the Scriptures. These rules were renewed in several councils under Charlemagne and the following princes. Particularly in the second Council of Chalons, A.D. 813, it was appointed: "That according to the order of Charles

the Emperor, bishops should set up schools to teach both grammar and the knowledge of the Scriptures. And in the Council of Toul or Savonieres, in Lorraine, the decree was renewed, that schools of the holy Scriptures, and human learning, should be erected; forasmuch, as by the care of the religious emperors in former days, by this means both ecclesiastical knowledge and human learning had made a considerable progress in the world." Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticæ*, Book 13, c. 4, sec. 9.

126. Finally, the primitive Christians were not only solicitous to procure the Scriptures for themselves, but those who had the means were anxious to put them into the hands of others. We have seen an instance of this in the Emperor Constantine, and we have another in Pamphilus the Martyr, the friend of Eusebius of Cæsarea, who was at considerable expense in this noble department of Christian charity.—“He most readily, not only lent the Scriptures to be read, but also gave them away, and that not merely to men, but likewise to women, whom he saw devoted to reading; therefore, he procured many copies, that when need required, he might bestow them on those who wished for them.” Euseb. *Vita. Pamph. Lib. 3*, apud Uss. *Hist. Dogm.* p. 18. Thus, we see, that the Bible Societies of the present day are only following the example of the Pamphiluses and Constantines of the primitive church.

127. It is manifest from the foregoing facts, that the primitive Christians had the highest esteem for the sacred Scriptures, and did all they could to promote the study of them. We may safely conclude, then, that

among them they were books not little read, but universally and well known. Of this I shall give a few illustrations. "If you went," says St. Chrysostom, "to the Ocean, and to the British Isles, if you sailed to the Euxine Sea, if you went to the Southern countries; you would hear all, every where discoursing on things out of the Scriptures, with another voice indeed, but not with another faith, and with a different tongue, but with a consenting judgment." *Serm. de Util. Lect. Scripturæ.* In *Uss. Religion of the Ancient Irish*, p. 3. St. Augustine mentions that St. Anthony, the monk, though he could not read, had the Scriptures by heart, from hearing them read." *De Doctrina Christ.* apud *Uss. Hist. Dogm.* p. 20. Sozomen tells us, that Mark, the hermit, was so well acquainted with the Scriptures in his youth, that he could repeat all the Old and New Testament without a book. *Lib. 6, c. 29.* Apud *Uss. Hist. Dogm.* p. 55. Socrates says: "That the Emperor Theodosius, junior, could say the sacred Scriptures by heart." *Lib. 7, c. 22.* Pope St. Gregory the Great, gives an account of a poor man at Rome, named Servulus, who, though he could not read, had bought a copy of the word of God, and induced religious men to come to his house and read it for him, by which means he became perfectly acquainted with the sacred Scriptures. *Hom. 15, in Evangelia,* apud *Uss. Hist. Dogm.* p. 92.

128. I shall add only another instance, it is that of a blind man named John, one of the martyrs of Palestine, concerning whom Eusebius writes thus: "It is needless to extol this man for his morals, and the philosophic life he led, especially, since he was not so admirable on that account as for his strength of memory; for he had the

whole books of the sacred Scripture written, not on tablets of stone, as the divine apostle says, nor on parchments, or paper, which are devoured by moths and time, but on the fleshly tables of his heart, that is, in his bright soul, which were legible to the most clear eye of his mind, in so much, that whenever he pleased, he could produce out of his mouth, as it were out of a treasury of learning, sometimes the books of the Law and those of the Prophets, another while, the historical parts of Scripture, and again, at other times, the Evangelical and Apostolic writings. I was, I confess, amazed, when I first saw this man standing in the midst of a numerous congregation, and repeating some parts of divine Scripture. For as long as I could only hear his voice, I supposed him to have read what is usually rehearsed in such assemblies. But when I approached very near, and saw plainly what was done, to wit, all the rest standing round, and having their eye-sight clear and perfect, and him making use of the eyes of his understanding only; I could not forbear praising and glorifying God." Euseb. De Martyr. Pales. c, 13.

129. I have now laid before the reader evidence from reason and Scripture, which, as I conceive, establishes the right of the laity to the unrestricted reading of the word of God; and have shown that this principle was acknowledged and acted on for many centuries in the Christian church. But as this right has of late been publicly and violently opposed, it becomes necessary to examine the weight of what has been advanced against it. It has been asserted that there are circumstances connected with the sacred Scriptures, which render them unfit for general reading; these, as far as I can judge

from the reports of the recent discussions* on the subject, may be reduced to three heads, *indelicacy*, *obscurity*, and *dangerous tendency*; an indelicacy, which made them unfit for the perusal of females; an obscurity, which rendered it impossible for the unlearned to extract truth from them; and a tendency dangerous to the last degree, in as much as heresy, schism, sectarianism, fanaticism, licentiousness, rebellion, &c., &c., have sprung from the unrestricted reading of them.

130. Had these objections been brought against the Bible by persons who avowed their disbelief of its divine origin, there would have been no ground to charge them with inconsistency, or with want of reverence to that which they considered as proceeding from the Deity. But, when such things are asserted by men who avow their belief, that the Bible is written by the inspiration of God, I must confess, I am at a loss to discover in their conduct either consistency or reverence. One thing, however, is plainly discoverable in this procedure, which is, that when men who avow their belief that the Bible has come from a Being of perfect purity, wisdom, and goodness, yet find it necessary, for the support of a particular cause, to charge that book with indelicacy, obscurity, and dangerous tendency: their cause is a desperate one indeed.

131. Let us compare what these gentlemen affirm to be true of the Scriptures with what the writers of the Scriptures affirm of them, and which by their avowal must be true also, and let us see what consistency or reverence will result from the comparison. In the 118th

* Held in different parts of Ireland, about the time this pamphlet was written.

Psalm, David says : " By what doeth a young man correct his way? by observing thy words;" that is, by observing thy indelicate, obscure and dangerous book. And again, v. 105 : " Thy word," that is, thy indelicate, obscure, and dangerous book, " is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths." St. Paul, writing to the Colossians, says, iii. 16 : " Let the word of Christ," that is, an indelicate, obscure, and dangerous book, " dwell in you abundantly." The same apostle writes to Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 15 : " And because from thy infancy thou hast known the holy Scriptures," i. e. an indelicate, obscure, and dangerous book, " which can instruct thee to salvation." And in the next verse, " All Scripture," that is, all that indelicate, obscure, and dangerous book, " inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work." Our blessed Lord, addressing the Jews, says, John v. 39 : " Search, or ye search, the Scriptures," that is, an indelicate, obscure, and dangerous book, " for you think in them to have life everlasting." Strange enough to look for such a thing from such a book, but what follows is still stranger, " and the same are they that give testimony of *me*." So, that it seems, an indelicate, obscure, and dangerous book, can testify of the holy Jesus, of the light of the world, of him that came to seek and to save that which was lost. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke, xvi., our Lord represents Abraham as saying to the rich man : " They have Moses and the Prophets," that is, an indelicate, obscure, and dangerous book, " let them hear them;" and afterwards, " if they believe not Moses and the Prophets;" that is,

an indelicate, obscure, and dangerous book, "neither will they believe, if any one shall rise again from the dead."

192. This is an unpleasant topic to dwell on, but it appeared to me important to place the subject in a just point of view, and sincerely would I rejoice if any of those who have suffered themselves to be hurried into this, to say the least of it, inconsistency and want of reverence for the word of God, should perceive the desperate nature of the cause, which called for such procedure, on the part of any one who professed and called themselves Christians.

193. Strange as it may appear to those who are conversant with the Scriptures, even the Scriptures themselves have been appealed to, to oppose the right of the laity to the unrestricted reading of them. The passages brought forward were indeed but few, and I know of only two to which it is necessary to call the reader's attention, as they, *in sound*, though certainly not *in sense*, might appear to some to have weight in the controversy. One of these passages is in the Second Epistle of St. Peter, and 16th verse: "As also, in all his (St. Paul's) Epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do all the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." From the fact stated in this verse, that certain characters wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction, it has been argued, that therefore they should not be laid open to the unrestricted reading of the laity. Two objections appear almost at first sight to offer themselves against this inference from the passage. The one is, that the text

itself proves, that the restriction which it is said to justify was not practised in the primitive church, for how could the unlearned and unstable wrest the Scriptures if they were kept from them? It is manifest they must have had them to use, or they could not have made a bad use of them.

134. The second objection is, that it appears clearly from the following verse the apostle wished to correct the evil which he mentions; now if, as it has been asserted, the proper corrective of the evil is to keep the book from general use, as this proper corrective could not have escaped the inspiration under which St. Peter wrote, here was the place for him to have recommended it, but this he does not; he does, however, recommend a remedy for the evil, but this is not only, *not* that now recommended, but one which implies the very reverse, for he says: "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." v. 18. Now, if the Scriptures be eminently a means of grace, if they be the purest source of divine knowledge, if, as the Fathers repeatedly say, and even a Decretal expressly asserts: "*Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ;*" (see Uss. Hist. Dogm. p. 206,) how could they comply with the apostle's command, unless by studying the Scriptures? His injunction, therefore, instead of repressing the reading of the Scriptures, enjoins it.

135. But let us attend more directly to the apostle's words. In the first place, then, it is clear from the text, that what St. Peter represents as hard to be understood, are not *the words* which St. Paul used in his epistles, but *the things* about which he wrote, "in which there are *some things hard to be understood*; which," that is,

which things hard to be understood, "the unlearned and unstable wrest," &c. To infer from this passage, that the sacred Scripture, considered as a book, or with reference to the words of which it is composed, is hard to be understood, is to draw a conclusion without premises, for it is of *things*, not of *words*, that St. Peter speaks. And then, if it be justifiable to withhold the Scriptures from men, because there are in them things hard to be understood, will it not equally follow, that it is right to withhold from them preaching, catechising, in fact, any information on such things; and where, let me ask, will this stop? Is not the very being of a God hard to be understood? Is not the creation of the world, is not the redemption of the world, hard to be understood? Is not man a mystery? Is not the residence of an immortal spirit in a material body hard to be understood? Is not the immortality of the soul hard to be understood? In short, are not the fundamental principles either of natural or revealed religion hard to be understood? Is any man, then, to be kept in ignorance of these things, because they are hard to be understood? And if not, why withhold the Scriptures from any one, because there are in them *some things hard to be understood?*

136. The same reasoning will hold as to what is said afterwards of persons wresting these things to their own destruction. Men of certain characters will pervert those religious truths which are hard to be understood, whether they read them in the Bible, or hear them from the pulpit, or have them brought before them in any other way.

137. But let it be granted that the view now taken of

this passage is false, and that it is of *words*, not of *things*, the apostle is speaking ; yet I conceive it can be proved, that even so understood, the text will not warrant the inference that the Scriptures are an obscure book, and therefore not fit to be read by all. A moment's reflection will detect the fallacious reasoning of this inference. St. Peter says, there are *some things* hard to be understood in *St. Paul's epistles*, therefore, say they who draw the above inference, the Scriptures are an obscure book, and therefore the Scriptures are unfit to be read by the common people. Now, granting for a moment, the justness of the reasoning, that if there are things hard to be understood in a book, that book is obscure ; and that if it be obscure, it ought not to be read ; yet common sense, I conceive, would teach us to argue thus : St. Peter says, there are some things hard to be understood in St. Paul's epistles, therefore some parts of St. Paul's epistles are obscure, and therefore some parts of St. Paul's epistles ought not to be read by the common people. But this inference would not suit the advocates for the restriction of Bible reading, as it is the book at large, and not merely the obscure parts of it, they wish to keep from the people.

138. Further. St. Peter says : " Which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." I apprehend, that the Greek word which St. Peter uses in this sentence, and which both the Romish and Protestant versions have translated, *unlearned*, was intended to convey a different meaning from what the word *unlearned* does, at least in the present day. It now gives us the idea of one that is not *learned*, and, in this sense, it describes what, with very

few exceptions, the Christians of St. Peter's day were. Such also was the apostle himself, for in Acts iv. 13, both he and St. John are regarded by the Jewish rulers "as illiterate and ignorant men;" nor does the inspired historian intimate that this was not the case. It is an undeniable fact, that, with respect to what was then, or is now, considered education and learning, St. Peter himself, and nearly all his fellow Christians, were *unlearned*. It cannot, therefore, be supposed, that when he intended to describe the character of those "who wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction," he would make use of a word which was strictly descriptive of himself and of the persons to whom he wrote.

139. The word used by St. Peter occurs, I believe, only in this text, and is no where else to be found in the New Testament; and, as it stands in connection with one which denotes a temper or disposition of mind, they probably best express the apostle's meaning, who render his words *the unteachable and unsteady*. But on this I shall not rest. I will, therefore, suppose that by the word "unlearned," is meant unlearned or uninstructed in Christian truth; the declaration of the apostle then is, that they who are uninstructed in Christian truth, and unstable, wrest the obscure parts of the Scripture to their own destruction: but the inference drawn is, therefore the laity should not read so dangerous a book; as if all the laity were unstable and uninstructed in Christian truth, and all the Scriptures obscure.

140. There is a word used in the text which deserves particular attention, it is that which is translated *wrest*, and which, as every Greek scholar knows, signifies to

distort the limbs on a rack, to torture. It appears then, that before even the obscure parts of Scripture can do the reader any harm, they must be tortured and dislocated, like an unfortunate victim, whose limbs are broken, or put out of joint, by the rack.

141. Supposing then that the text speaks *of words*, not *of things*, let us hear all that it says about the Scriptures. It tells us that there are some obscure passages in St. Paul's epistles and other parts of the word of God, which the uninstructed and unstable pervert to their own destruction; but before even they can do this, they are obliged to rack and torture these obscure passages into a sense totally different from their natural meaning. Such being the case, it may be safely affirmed, that the process of reasoning, if such it can be called, which would draw from these words a justification of their practice who withhold from the laity the word of God, is as great an outrage on common sense, as the practice itself is, on the right and liberties of Christians.

142. To conclude these remarks on the text under consideration. Whatever may be its meaning, it could not be intended by St. Peter to countenance the practice of withholding the Scriptures from the laity. To understand it in this sense, would be to make St. Peter's conduct self-contradictory and ridiculous. Would it not be self-contradictory and ridiculous for the apostle to write two epistles to the laity of the Christian church, and yet at the end of the last of them to assure these people that it would be a dangerous thing to read them? Would it not be ridiculous for him to say at one time that St. Paul wrote his epistles, "according to the wisdom given to him," 2 Pet. iii. 15, and afterwards to

assert that it would be dangerous to read them? If St. Peter thought, that it would be dangerous to read St. Paul's epistles because there were in them things hard to be understood, would it not be most foolish for him to write afterwards "on these things" himself? verse 16. Finally, would it not be an absurdity, unparalleled in the records of folly itself, for him in the first chapter of this epistle to assure the persons to whom he wrote, that he would "always put them in remembrance of these things," verse 12; that *as long as he lived* he would do so, verse 13; nay, that he would endeavour, *that after his death* they might have whereby to keep a memory of them, verse 15; and yet, at the end of the last chapter to inform them, that they had nothing to do whatever with reading what either he, or St. Paul, or any other inspired persons had written, as it would be a very dangerous thing to do so?

143. The second passage of Scripture, to which I feel it necessary to call the reader's attention, occurs in the same Epistle of St. Peter, and is as follows: "Understanding this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation." 2 Pet. i. 20. To the use, or to speak more justly, the abuse which has been made of this text, as a ground for withholding the Scriptures from any one, there lies at the very outset this objection, that if it justify the practice for which it is quoted, it makes St. Peter contradict himself. In the preceding verse, when speaking of prophecy, he says: "*Whereunto ye do well to attend, as to a light that shineth in a dark place:*" but in the next verse, according to the inference drawn from it in the late discussions, he is made say, *whereunto ye do ill to*

attend, as it is a dark thing out of which you can get no light.

144. There are two points of view in which this text may be considered, and in neither of these will it justify the practice in support of which it is alleged. Supposing it to refer to *the readers*, not to *the writers*, of prophecy, that is, taking it in the sense most favourable to the restricters of Bible-reading, still it will not give them the conclusion they want. For even granting their reasoning on the passage to be correct, it can only amount to this, no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation, no prophecy of Scripture therefore can be understood by private judgment, and as what cannot be understood by private judgment, should not be read by the common people, therefore no *prophecy* of Scripture should be read by the common people. Now, as the prophecies are but a part, and even a small part of the Scriptures, until it can be proved that a part is equal to the whole, it must be acknowledged that the reasoning is inconclusive which would draw from this passage an argument for withholding the Scriptures at large from any one.

145. But the language of St. Peter teaches us to refer this passage to *the writers* of prophecy, and not to *the readers* of it, for he says expressly: "No prophecy of Scripture *is made* by private interpretation;" it is then of making or giving prophecy he speaks, not of reading or understanding it. And this is further confirmed by the following verse, where the apostle assigns a reason for his assertion, that "no prophecy is made by private interpretation;" for he says: "prophecy *came* not by the will of man at any time, but the holy men of God

spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost." The "private interpretation" of the twentieth verse manifestly corresponds with the "will of man" in this, which, St. Peter asserts, is not the source of prophecy, but, on the contrary, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The passage refers, then, to the utterers or writers of prophecy, not to the readers of it, and therefore furnishes no authority for withholding the word of God from the perusal of any one.

146. It was also attempted in the late discussions, to shew by quotations from the Fathers, that they did not acknowledge the right of the laity to the unrestricted reading of the word of God. Little, however, was done in this line, and indeed but little could be done. For though detached sentences from these writers, considered without reference to other parts of their works, and to the prevailing opinion of the church in their day, might appear to countenance the restriction of Scripture reading, yet, I believe, it will be found on the fullest investigation, that they approved of and recommended the general study of the word of God. If I err in this sentiment, I do so in company with a most eminent prelate of the Church of Rome, Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray, who says: "I think that much trouble has been taken unnecessarily to prove what is incontestable, that in the first ages of the church the laity read the holy Scriptures. It is as clear as day-light that all people read the Bible and liturgies in their native languages: that as a part of good education children were made to read them: that in their sermons the ministers of the church regularly explained to their flocks whole books of the sacred volume: that the text of the Scriptures was very familiar to the people: that the clergy exhorted

the people to read them: that the clergy blamed the people for not reading them, and considered the neglect of the perusal of them a source of heresy and immorality." *Œuvres Completes*, tome 3, p. 49.

147. It is deeply to be regretted that this happy state of things did not continue; but as the Latin tongue ceased to be vernacular in different countries, the Scriptures which had been so long and so generally read in that language fell into disuse; and this disuse was confirmed by the many corruptions which crept into the Christian Church. The word of God was too generally neglected by clergy and laity, though many exemplary characters in both raised their voices against this evil, and endeavoured to correct it. Notwithstanding this increasing inattention to holy writ, it was not until the thirteenth century that any body of Christian Ecclesiastics was found hardy enough openly to interdict the reading of the sacred Scriptures. That was reserved for the Council of Toulouse, by which it was decreed: "*That the laity should not be permitted to have the books of the Old or New Testament; but that some might perhaps be allowed, for the sake of devotion, to possess the Psalter, the Breviary, or the Rosary, but not even these translated into the vulgar tongue.*" Canon 14. As this was the first attempt, so far as I can learn, by ecclesiastical authority to prohibit the laity from reading the Scriptures; I shall beg the reader's attention to the time, the occasion, and the proceedings of the Synod of Toulouse.

148. It was held at a period when the church had, both in principles and practice, utterly degenerated from its primitive purity. Peter of Ailly, Bishop of Cambray, and a Cardinal of the Church of Rome, in the preface of

his treatise on "The Reformation of the Church," which he laid before the Council of Constance, will enable us to form some idea of the state of religion at the time when the Synod of Toulouse was convened. "Many things," he says, "which were formerly written by me concerning the reformation of the church, I have determined now to reduce to a brief statement, and to present it to the examination and correction of the sacred general Council of Constance. Which reformation of the church, how necessary it was long since, and how much more so now, its lamentable deformity evidently shows; concerning which, the blessed Bernard lamentably complained, in his thirty-third discourse on the Canticles, saying: 'A putrid disease is at this day creeping through the whole body of the church, and the wider, the more desperate; the more internal, the more dangerous. For should an open heretic rise up, he would be cast out and withered: should a violent enemy, she might perhaps conceal herself from him. But now, whom shall she cast out, or from whom shall she conceal herself? All are friends, yet all are enemies. All partizans, yet all adversaries. All domestic, yet none pacific. All kinsmen, yet all seeking their own interest. They are ministers of Christ, but they serve Antichrist. They are honoured by the goods of the Lord, who do not honour the Lord.' And, having enumerated some excessive abuses of the ecclesiastics, he adds—'It was predicted of old, and now is the time of the accomplishment come. Behold, in peace is my bitterness most bitter. Isaiah, xxxviii. 17. Bitter, first in the slaughter of the martyrs, more bitter afterwards in the conflict with heretics, most bitter now in the manners of those of her own house.

hold. She cannot drive away, she cannot fly from those, so have they grown up and been multiplied beyond number. The wound of the church is internal and incurable, and therefore in peace is her bitterness most bitter. But in what peace? It is peace, and it is not peace. Peace in respect of heathens, peace in respect of heretics, but not indeed in respect of her children. There is the voice of one lamenting in this time, I have brought up children and exalted them : but they have despised me. Isaiah, i. 2. They have despised and dishonoured me by a base life, a base gain, a base commerce, finally, by a traffic which walks in darkness.' If these things were said by the blessed Bernard, they may now much more be said : since from that time she has gone from bad to worse, and in every state, as well spiritual as secular, having cast off the honour of virtue, has fallen into the varied deformities of vice." *Fasciculus Rerum*, p. 407.

149. It appears from this quotation, that in the time of St. Bernard, who died about the middle of the twelfth century, the church had so far degenerated as to stand in urgent need of reformation ; and, as instead of improving, it went on from " bad to worse," we may form some idea of the state of religion in the thirteenth century.

150. It was in vain, at this period, that the people looked to the clergy either for instruction or example ; they had not improved since the time when St. Bernard said of them : " We cannot now say, as is the people so is the priest, for the people are not so bad as their priests." The laity were obliged therefore to look for instruction and example elsewhere, and they found them in the sacred Scriptures, which, by the means of Peter Waldo, had been translated into the vulgar tongue.

The perusal of these discovered the gross errors and abuses which then prevailed in the church, and those who opposed these evils, and adopted a purer faith and practice, soon got the name of heretics, and became objects of ecclesiastical censure and cruelty. The Inquisition was established against them; crusades were set on foot against them; by both of which, most horrible atrocities were perpetrated upon multitudes of these interesting people; and, with a view to their final extermination in the territories of the Count of Toulouse, a Synod was assembled in that city, in the year 1229, in which the Pope's Legate, with three Archbishops and several Bishops, enacted forty-five canons *for the rooting out of heresy*, of which the following are a specimen.

151. "The first enjoins the archbishops and bishops to settle in each parish, a priest and two or three approved laymen, to make inquisition after heretics, and to engage them upon oath to use their utmost endeavours to find them out, and to present them forthwith to the bishop, and to the lords or their bailiffs. The second enjoins the same on abbots who had an exempt jurisdiction. The third recommends the lords of the respective places, to search after heretics, *and to ruin the places to which they resort*. In the fourth, there is added the penalty of losing their estates, against those who know that a heretic lives in their territories, and will suffer it. And with respect to those who shall neglect to make inquisition after them, it is ordered in the next canon, that they also shall be punished for their neglect. The houses where heretics shall be found are not so much as spared; but in the sixth canon it is declared that *they shall be destroyed, and that the ground shall be confiscated*. The bailiffs are condemned to the

loss of their offices and estates, if they be careless and negligent in searching after heretics. The ninth gives leave to the lords and their officers to apprehend heretics upon the territories of other lords. The tenth enacts that heretics who voluntarily recant, shall not remain in the villages where they were, if they be suspected of heresy, but shall be removed to other Catholic villages which are free from suspicion : that they shall wear two crosses on their clothes, and have certificates from their bishops of their being reconciled. In the eleventh it is ordered, with respect to those who are converted by the fear of death, or for some other such account, *that they shall be shut up in a walled place*, that so they may not corrupt others." Among such truly Christian enactments, and quite in the liberal spirit of them, occurs the fourteenth, which "prohibits the laity from having the books of the Old or New Testament, unless it be a Psalter or a Breviary, or the Rosary; and does not permit them to have even these translated into the vulgar tongue." Dupin, vol. 2, p. 455.

152. The reader has now seen, in what an age, on what an occasion, and in connexion with what proceedings, the laity were first by ecclesiastical authority forbidden the use of the word of God, and it will be for him to determine which is to be preferred, the decision of the first general Council of Nice, A.D. 325 : "*That no Christian should be without the Scriptures*;" or the directly opposite enactment of the local Synod of Toulouse in the year 1229 : "*That none of the laity should have the books of the Old and New Testament.*"



